



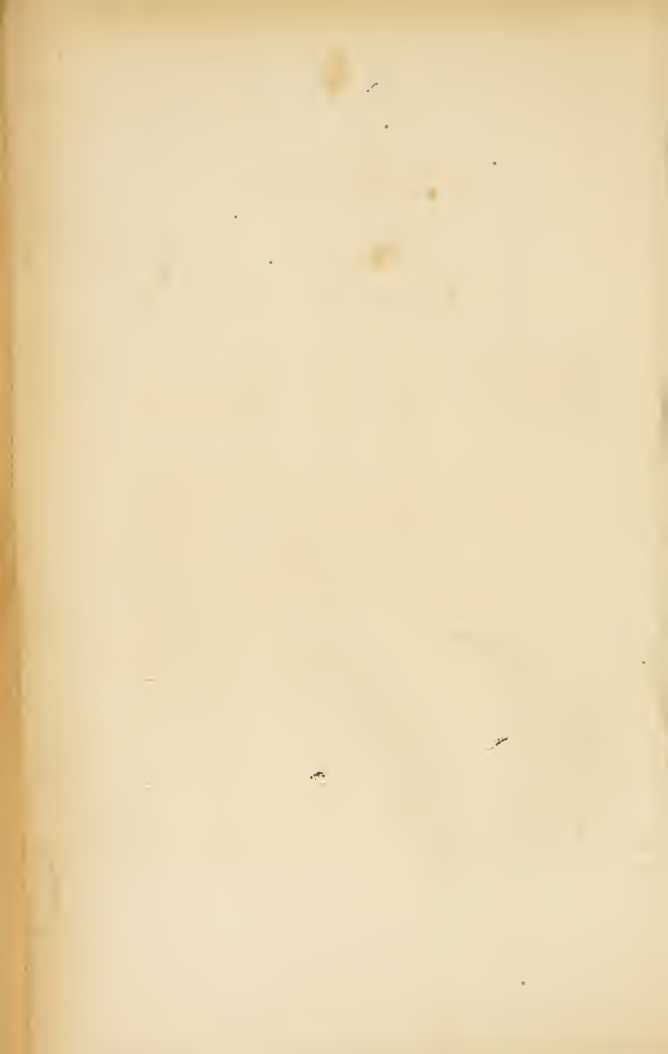
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

Chap. PS 1534

Shelf 27

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.





MANHATTA;

A

LEGEND OF THE HUDSON.

BY

VAN BUREN DENSLOW.



NEW YORK:

H. DAYTON, 79 JOHN-STREET.

1856.

PS 1534
118

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1856,

By H. DAYTON,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern
District of New York.

TO

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT, ESQ.

This Poem

IS, BY PERMISSION,

RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED.

P R E F A C E .

IN presenting this volume to the public, the author cannot but claim the indulgence due to one who has ventured upon a previously untrodden ground. The romancer and novelist have indeed explored the wilds of Indian character, and imaginatively and even poetically portrayed in prose the lives and contests of the red-men.

But the poet, to whom the simplicity of their lives, the vigor of their hardy natures, and the mystery of their origin, existence, and decay, seem so suggestive of poetic imaginations, has passed over the field, or only contributed to the world short though beautiful reminiscences of that primitive people.

Nor is the author unconscious of the risk which he has assumed in invoking the aid of

the Epic Muse in the task of exploring a wild so unreclaimed. And it is therefore with much diffidence and many misgivings that he now consigns this volume to the public. It enters like the timid bark of the early navigator into a region as unexplored, but possibly as rich in its future contributions to the ideal world, as the empire of the red-men, upon the arrival of the first sail, was rich with future wealth to the actual world. If it shall have the effect to direct the attention of more able explorers in the same field, or to create in the minds of any a greater interest in the characteristics of the red-men, the object of the author will have been more than realized. Nor is he without the hope that this effort may also have, in the minds of its readers, some tendency to substitute for the low estimation in which the children of the forest are too often held, a feeling of just respect for the many noble traits which existed in their primitive characters, before they were subjected to so many of the vices, and so few of the virtues, of civilization.

MANHATTÀ:

A LEGEND OF THE HUDSON.

WHEN sylvan halls Columbia's bosom bore,
With oaken minaret and maple spire ;
When dark-eyed maiden sighed in birchen bower ;
When flew from blackened copse the red man's ire ;
When love was breathed deep in the woody glade,
Where mid-day yields to twilight's silent shade ;
When echoed warwhoop from the forest came,
And timid deer fled from the hunter's aim ;
When rose the wild-woods in green verdure dressed,
Where now the Hudson's towns and villas rest ;
When panther leaped on palisades' high cliff,
And the red infant dove from tiny skiff ;
When untaught nature sported everywhere,—
To sing that time, I'd tune my forest lyre.

ARGUMENT.

Scene upon the eastern shore of the Hudson. Manbatta, alone, crosses the Hudson, to visit a remote and secluded bower, among the cliffs of the palisades, consecrated to the memory of her father, Nappekamah, once the chief of the Shattauchs. The Shattauchs now believe him to have joined their enemies, the Iroquois. She reaches the bower after night-fall. While in a reverie, it is entered by Uncas, who declares his passion, which is returned. She suddenly concludes the interview, and he retires. She weeps in grief, and finally falls asleep within the bower. Sees, in a dream, the vision of her father, Nappekamah, whom she promises to meet again that night. Her dream continuing, she enters the land of spirits and dreams, which were one in the primitive idea of the Indian. Enters first the abode of the wicked; then the wilderness of Hope, guarded by the monster "*Fear*," through which she finally effects a passage into the spirit world.

CANTO FIRST.

THE MOUNTAIN BOWER.

THE setting king of day, in splendor vailed,
Cast on each changing cloud its varied hue ;
Now darkened, purpled, and now snowy paled,
Each cloud contrasted with its home of blue.
The castellated palisades uprise,
Their storm-worn summits kiss the western skies ;
The eastern heavens, with unspotted blue,
Are varied by the ever gladsome hue
Of mingled green, from jutting hillets thrown,
With autumn tints of red and yellow strown :—
Here, rugged oak, with her reluctant store,
Contented awhile with winter's blighting hoar ;
There, gaudy dogwood, with her crimson red,
And golden chestnut earlier honors shed ;
And beech and tulip, birch and maple, all
A mottled softness casting o'er the whole,

Are interspersed with the dark silver pine,
Sighing, half-mournful, o'er the dying vine.

In yon bold bluffs, but one indenting glen
Relieves the shore ;—'tis where the Nepperhan,
A checkered stream, that, in its lengthened flow,
Kissing the crag, or meand'ring below,
Laves the wild willow's leaf and Indian's brow ;
(So the frail bee, that still inconstant keeps,
Now from the thistle or the violet sips ;)
Unconscious of its charms, it spurns its course,
Nor rests, till mingling with the billow hoarse,
Amid the Hudson's deep, majestic course.
There, fairy cove, by promontory green
Half-hid, reflects the love-inspiring scene,
And all unrippled sleeps, its walls between.

But now, as would a pebble thrown, or leaf,
Or swallow's dipping wing, its surface wave,
A billow, wreathed upon the wave, foreruns
A light canoe, that 'round the headland comes,
Stemming the current with indifference brave ;
While female form, of loveliness unvierd,
With fairy oar, sculls through the liquid tide ;
Her form erect, and cast in beauty's mould,
Her changeful glances speak the fiery soul ;
Her lengthened tresses, waving with the wind,
Or, hanging in long raven folds behind,

But half conceal those jetty, beaming eyes,
That flash beneath the long luxuriant lash,
Like hidden jewels, from the half-oped case,
Twinkling successive with their varied dies.

Some snowy fox, on farthest northern plain,
Where quarried winter holds her lasting reign,
Had, hapless, fallen by the hunter's aim ;
And, pure as snow-fall on the statue, prest
His heaving fur above the damsel's breast.
She seemed one born of love—love to conceive,
Her very skiff an ardent lover seemed,
Anxious the dull inglorious shore to leave,
And buffet with her 'gainst the rolling stream.
It shot more gayly from her watery wand,
Than from the ruder power of stronger hand.
Thus doth it gayly glide, from headland side,
And bound forth for the rougher channel tide ;
With steady prow, oblique to passing stream,
It strives the distant palisades to gain.
Strange ! There was sorrow in that maiden's look,
And once, a tear rolled from her dewy eye ;
And, as she turned to the upheaving rock,
Her bosom heaved as burdened with a sigh.

Shattaук, her race—Nappekamah, her sire—
Names, whilom, with imperial power fraught.
Defeat had rain'd upon the Shattaук fire,

Far worse had brought the chieftain's name to naught.
Many the moons and seasons that had waned,
Since old Nappekamah, through hostile hand,
Or trait'rous heart, in their afflictions low,
Leaving his subjects, succumbed to the foe ;
His sole requital of their love bestowed,
Thus, with fresh woes, to swell their crushing load :
As when an old man, bowed with many cares,
Broken in heart, and sinking int' the grave,
Is rudely graspèd by his silvery hairs,
And struck to earth ;—so, when the foremost brave,
Nappekamah, did strike with treasonous hand,
Down sank his race, and bled o'er all the land.
But there was one, to whom his tarnished fame,
And rumored baseness, ever harmless came,
Nor blanched her cheek with fear, or brow with shame.
Manhatta, she, sole offspring of his prime,
And sole defender of his blackened name,
Doomed thus to feel the obloquy of crime,
The stings and arrows of unfriended shame ;—
She, where of old his feet were wont to roam,
Upon the top of cliff-crowned palisades,
Had twined a leafy bower, a mountain home ;
And oft, as now, sought out its silent shades,
To think, to pray, or bathe in those rich streams
That course the meadows of the land of dreams.
But doth no other passion holds its sway
In her form tremulous, and dewy eye,

Who thus forgets the privilege of day,
And, 'neath night's mantle, secretly doth hie
To some lone spot, where rocks and mountains hide?
Doth filial love arrest th' abstracted oar,
And leave, to bound at random o'er the tide,
Her light canoe? And is it, too, no more,
No deeper trance, than that a father, lost
For years, might cause the soul with sorrow tost,
Which now rests o'er her, heaving many a sigh?
Judge not the young for eccentricity!
Youth's beauteous dawn ne'er yet lit up a sky,
But love's bright clouds did soon go darkling by.

As sculls she now swift through the liquid tide,
The lengthened shadow from the palisade
Linger'd reluctant o'er each dying hill,
As maiden loath her charms might half conceal,
To leave the rest more pure and infantile,
But, fugitive and wearied, soon 'tis driven
To find its last stronghold in the high heaven.
Then night encircling with her gloomy band,
Day wings her western flight to spirit land,
And twinkling gems, in the blue heaven's concave,
Illume the void, like Hope's bright dreams the grave.

Approaching now the steep and rocky stand,
The birchen bark kisses the parting sand;
The graceful pilot, with elastic bound,

Leaves tiny track upon an upraised mound ;
Then waits for the next wave with watchful eye,—
With it, the bark leaps from the billow, high
Upon the gravelled shore. She, with her bow,
And fairy quiver, leaves the lone canoe.
Dark, shadowy night had spread his curtain 'round,—
Damp the black air, and cold the dewy ground.
Nature had clothed her loveliness in gloom,
The grim owl shrieked forth from her living tomb ;
The echoes answered to the midnight howl
Of bear, and catamount and wolfish growl ;
The buzzing partridge wing was sung to rest,
Ere the young maiden's foot the summit pressed.

Then hied she, swiftly, by the well-known path,
Beneath a rustling panoply of boughs,
Whose leaves did bend and courtesy as she passed,
And, disappearing, wave their fond adieus.
But now she enters, with a joyful bound,—
As if 'twere home beneath its silent shade—
A rural hall, whose many charms, around,
The darkness would but mar, yet can but aid.
A willow folds its drapery 'round the bower,
Laden with tear of dew, and mournful sigh,
Which the patrolling night-winds, on their tour,
Vouchsafe to those who seek their sympathy.
A fountain, gushing upwards at its foot,
Like warm affection in the sinless breast,

Ere yet it speeds upon its work of good,
Enraptures with its native loveliness.
The lake, thus formed in pleasing miniature,
Reflects its short extent of winding shore,
Begirt with many a monarch of the wood,
That stands, high sentry o'er the solitude.

The Fairy Hall, where enters now the fay,
And flings upon its mossy couch her form,
Tells, here and there, her many a wandering way,
As now, untimely sad, or timely gay,
She doth betake her to this wild-wood home.
The buck, whose antlers guard the lowly door,
Her hand had scarce in merry mood brought down,
When the strange sadness of the passing hour
Around its branches gloomy night-shade flung ;
And many a trophy of the bounding chase
Is thrown around in each neglected place ;
And many a flower, strewn when the heart was gay,
Now lies, in fading sadness, to decay.

Amid these signs of transient joy and woe,
She sits her down, to meditate alone.
Why is she timid ? Why doth listen so,
When leaves may rustle, or the night-winds moan ?
Doth *fear* thus start when whispers play along ?
Is *fear* thus disappointed when they're gone ?
'Twould seem not ;—yet, one scarce knows why,

Save that there's more of hope within her eye,
And less of thought than of expectancy.
But no ! 'twas but the leafy winds of night,
Playing with boughs, in fluttering amours,
From tree to tree, beneath the bright moonlight
Without, naught moves but twinkling leaves and
stars.

Again,—most surely 'twas a footstep then,
Beneath which snapped, but now, yon fallen limb:
List ! There's no sound : thou art again deceived.
Perchance, a limb, from some high top-branch cleaved,
And brake in falling. All is still ! 'Tis so
For many minutes. And Manhatta's brow
Falls in her hand, in a deep revery,
On which her vision's fixed. She doth not see
Her threshold crossed by one, nor know that he
Hath knelt before her, on a trembling knee,
And vainly strove to murmur, "*Pardon me !*"

The spell hath broke. Turning, she gazed on him,
Till various feelings, gathering to the brim,
Seemed to oppress the windows of her soul
With tears, which strove to burst from pride's control,—

But conquered all, and, coldly on his ear,
The greeting fell, " Why art thou, stranger, here ?"
The words, so cold, were tremulously said,
Their pride, nor look, nor gesture seconded ;

But quivering lip indifference denied,
And eye cast down, her proud disdain belied.
"Maiden, forgive my poor defence," he said ;
"I have no other plea, than thus to swear,
With my poor hand on burning heart and head,
I cannot flee thee, thou art ever there.
O maiden ! thou art in my walk, my cot ;
Thou art before me in my midnight dreams ;
Thou comest in the air, lookest out of streams,
Nor can I flee away where thou art not.
But am I stranger to thee ? Pr'ythee, speak !
Thou art not cruel ;—why, then, be unkind ?
Thou, who didst once into this bosom break,
And say thou lov'st me, and t' aught else was blind,
Oh ! say thou lov'st me now !—why not, if then ?
Ah ! why this dark estrangement of thy heart ?
What crime must purge, what penance must begin,
What sea must traverse—to what distant part ?
Though race dissent, or circumstance conflict,
Didst thou but love with half the warmth I bear,
'Twere more than bars, like these, might contradict.
Burst these poor bonds ! I'll build a lonely lair
On th' island gem of some lake's bosom, far
Away ; and flee, with thee, the world, and war,
Race, hunting-grounds, and home, and all that's fair
Besides, for the one joy, to live and love thee there.
Dear maid, but speak !—but say thou lov'st me now !
The heavens shall witness our eternal vow ;

And, ere the sun thrice on its course hath driven,
Where the chaste stars now gleam upon our love,
One couch beneath—one sheltering roof above—
One island grot we've found—one home—one heaven !''

A slight, warm hand lay thrilled in his embrace,
'The other feigned to hide emotions dear ;
And, as the branches swayed above the place—
Now lightening, darkening that bosom near—
He thought it heaved with passion's witching grace,
And beat beneath that richest gem—love's tear.
Oh ! if the boon to mortals e'er is given,
To quaff on earth one drop of heavenly bliss,
'Tis when, beneath the holy air of even,
Two lovers, by tumultuous passions driven,
Feel their lips dumb to all language save the kiss.
He raised that hand, unconscious, to his lips,
Whence every other eloquence was gone ;
Even as the bee clings to the flower, he sips
The honied nectar of existence from.
'Twas vain to strive ; she would, nay, must give
o'er :

Her yielding neck, and pulsing bosom yearn'd
On his to lie, and cling there evermore,
And prove what quenchless fires within her burned.
Yet other thoughts assailed,—she strove to rise ;
Like her disdain, were nerve and power gone.

All else seemed chained, but tears within her eyes ;
All else seemed weak, but Love—a giant strong.

While thus we sit, like spirits of the skies,
Without the power to stray from Paradise,
Angels approach to fill an hour like this
Its every moment with an age of bliss.
By power unobserved, unknown to them,
They nearer, closer drew, till, side by side,
Her o'er-flushed brows did on his bosom lean,
And so life's courses did together glide,
Her temples beat, close to his own heart's tide.
No flimsy texture, made for cultured sin,
To hide its nature, and its thoughts, within,
(Or wardrobe wall, with cowardice beneath,
That guards frail virtue, but by beauty's sheath,
And builds, each form of grace, a harem, over,
Whence scarce may eye or fingers play the rover,
Betraying beauty to the dreaming lover,)
Defends the fairer from the stronger bosom,
Or breaks the force of beating unison.
Oh ! who hath deep 'mid nature's solitude,
Where the pale moon in solemn silence reigns,
Through starry heaven, and o'er the sombre wood,
Far from men's haunts, loves, hates, disdains,
Far from men's coldness, crimes, and evil thoughts,
Fled to a manless world, and fondly taught
His hacknied fancy to forget that aught

Exists 'bout nature, his own thoughts, and God ;
And hath not, in those few, brief moments, trod
Fields greater, broader, than the race could plod
In centuries. Or felt that he enjoy'd,
For the brief time, a rose without its thorn,
An earth without its hell, and heaven without a void.
But if, while thus, to our embrace were borne
That form and soul within us deepest graven,
Whose image so embodies the divine
That worship seems her due from saints in heaven,
And all unworthy every offering thine ;
And when thou would'st have knelt a worshipper,
To find thy God descends to worship thee ;
And thrills, as thou, when thou approachest her,
Thine adoration of divinity
May sink to mortal love ;—but such a love
As angels, that ne'er fell from heaven above,
Ne'er knew ; for it at once doth all combine
Of mortal bliss, with half that is divine ;
Enough that's heavenly, and all that's human,
Since now the angel sighs, and now the woman.

To two young hearts, thus close together laid,
What are the world's chill rites and masquerade ?
Such are not members of a cold mankind,
But of each other, and themselves alone.
What published bans—what writ should be designed,
To prove to God and them that they are one ?

'Mid vice enlightened, devils civilized,
Let fashion cloak alike grace, virtue, shame !
Let priest attend, and bans be solemnized,
And ceremony seem a holy name—
A standing gate, that love may ne'er o'erride,
Till fly those bars apart from man and bride,
To close again on all the world beside.
Then be it closed on mutual love or hate,
'Tis closed upon what ne'er shall separate.
But to pure nature, love is ever pure,
Its dalliances ever holy, chaste ;
She knows no sin, and constitutes no priest,
But gazes, blushless, where few eyes may rest,
Upon what baser vice may not endure.
Blindness may term it darkness ; 'tis to nature
The early Eden of the sinless creature.

As thus they clung, each locked in other's arms,
Their bosoms stirred with fluttering alarms,
And feelings such as those alone have learned,
Who've wildly loved, and felt that love returned—
She raised her eyes unto his glistening glance,
And spoke as guided by some spirit trance :
“ Uncas ! 'tis vain to say I love thee not,
T' the very rending of my own heart's strings.
Love is not ours, but heaven's to allot,
And, when heaven's chosen meet, it upward springs,
While obstacles but cumulate the stream.

Since first I saw thee—ere I learned thy name,
I felt, dear Uncas, we were truly one :
I've loved thee still, and love thee now the same."
"Hath Heaven not our nuptials smiled upon?
Heaven's smile! Heaven's thanks!—would'st more?"
 he madly cried ;
And still he trembled, while she fondly sigh'd.
"Sure Heaven hath willed," she said ; " my temples
 press

This welcome pillow of thy throbbing breast :
Sure Heaven intended us in th' joy to live,
Of granting all, in pride our all to give."
And then there was a pause, a silence deep
And blissful, such as ne'er yet sought expression ;
Felt but when love first nestles love to sleep,
On the fresh pillow of untried possession—
And then she slowly, mildly, calmly rose,
As she some power from higher source had found ;
A flinchless will upon her lip reposed,
Shook off the leprosy by love imposed,
And stood erect, as one from chains unbound,
And thankful for the boon of liberty.
Then thus addressed him : " But it cannot be :
God wills, but all the fates oppose the joy ;
That most, by which thou art an Iroquois.
Show but the firmness of a woman now ;
We cannot wed, and therefore may not vow.
Farewell forever ! My last echo this.

Farewell! and seek some other happiness.
I will retire, and this brief hour of bliss
Shall come to me in future wretchedness,
To prove the truth, so hardly understood,
Our poor existence hath less ill than good."

Uncas arose. But, for the moment, dumb,
Not with astonishment, or shame alone ;
Chagrin and anger, stung and wounded pride
Passed o'er his brow in flushed and rapid tide,
And every human passion—love alone
Excepted—from his manly features shone.
He gazed a moment on her, as to assure
What both to sound and vision seemed obscure,
Then slightly bent his tall and graceful mien,
And spake, "Farewell forever!" and was seen,
Next moment, lost amid the darkling wood,
By the sad maid he had so wildly wooed :
He, to thread on, he knew not, recked not, where,
Through forest, thicket, jungle, den, or lair ;
Now to invoke all curses on her head,
And now to weep o'er what his lips had said ;
While she, in floods of deep, exhaustless grief,
And long, perpetual weeping, sought relief.

The moon still casts o'er all her silvery sheen,
Still gleams the lake's sweet miniature of heaven ;
The darkling wave, and all the fairy scene,

Are wrapped once more in silence as at even,
Save that a purer, holier charm is given,
Pervading all with that mysterious power
Which present angels cast o'er place and hour,—
A virgin slumbers in the fairy bower.

Not calmly rests the sleeper ; but, with wild
And speechless terror, doth pursue some dream,
As if some phantom, 'mid the darkness seen,
Enchained her soul, as from the void it smiled.
She turns, as stalks the vision slowly 'round,
As if each sense were in enchantment bound.
No trembling quiver doth assail her lip,
Or fear unworthy of a Shattaук maid.
With awe and wonder she regards the shape,
And pays respectful reverence to the shade,
Until, as if 'twere fading from the view,
She lifts her hand, and mutely waves adieu.
“ My father's form ! ” she, trembling, said ; “ 'twas
he !

This very night I yet shall follow thee.”
Then, kneeling to the lowly earth—in tone
So sad, yet sweet, that wafting echoes moan
As if their private griefs did lade the air—
Thus pours she forth her mingled hymn and prayer.

“ Great Spirit ! Ruler of the untamed winds !—
Whose angry breath walks oft-times on the deep,

Or sweeps in desolation o'er the land,
Conveying mortals to their dreamless sleep ;
The flashing semblance of whose fiery glance
Illumes the heavens, and holds the world entranced
With holy awe ! Whose dark displeasure frowns
Amid the storm, and the hoarse thunder drowns,
Yet whose parental love doth far excel
All that the good can think, or prophets tell,—
Suffer thy humblest messenger to bear
To thee a maiden's woes—a daughter's trembling
prayer ;

That weeps, not for herself—not for a friend ;
To such the woes of one, that one shall bend.
Herself, the reed that bows before the blast,
May rise and live when sorrow's storm hath past ;
Or, if it pass not, still may bend in life,
Or rest in death, all innocent of strife.

“ But like the towering oak—that braves the storm,
Though the live heaven peals, and earth doth yawn,
And when each limb and prop is torn away,
Still braves, with naked front, the warring sky—
Stands my loved race ;—and, ah ! too like that oak,
A day, an hour, may bring the fatal stroke ;
And they, once powerfully great, be strewn
Afar and wide, beneath a scornful heaven,
Where long each prop and allied friend hath flown,
Like limbs and branches by the tempest driven.

Great Spirit! hear the wailings of my race!—
Those silent wailings, that do yield no sound,
But stamp their furrows on the tearless face,
Like tracks of robbers on the desert ground.
Great Spirit! when Nappekamah was chief,
Blest were the flock that felt his gentle reign;
Blest were the friends that did alliance give,
And blest the conquered foes, by kindness slain.
Ah! sad the contrast, with his race dispersed,
His foes triumphant, and his mem'ry cursed!

“Cursed—cursed by fate, and deeds he fathered not,
His star, the dazzling wonder of the sky,
That shone with such serenity on high,
Falling, hath pierced the common infamy;
And now, in deepest slough of fame, doth rot—
A traitor's grave. Why must this fate, most dire,
Upon Nappekamah's bared brows descend?
Why doth injustice wrong the godly sire,
And leave his child to mourn, that may not mend?”
This said, in full abandonment of woe,
She threw herself upon the lowly couch.
Down her fair cheeks the gushing fountains flow,
Like long-pent waters from the failing breach.
But grief, like every transport of our minds,
Is fleet, and fading, and to rest inclines
The wearied heart. Anon, her dewy eyes
Have veiled their griefs their curtaining lids behind.

Folded in slumber's tired embrace she lies,
Soft as the lake that at her feet doth wind,
When April's storm departs the blushing skies.
She sleeps. She smiles, and dreams. A wand
Perfumes the air with scents of Paradise.
There is a hovering, soothing, rustling sound,
As if fond spirits did descend and rise,
Or as some shadowy host were gathering round,—
A seraph power beamed in their fond, sweet eyes.
She felt upborne by some most gentle hand.
Lo! silently an angel's wings she hies,
To the far mystic realms of spirit-land.
Full many a wonder doth entrance her eye,
And throws its magic spell around her way ;
Secure, she wanders on, nor knowing why,
'Mid scenes unknown, beneath an unknown sky.
Here mountains bear their lonely peaks on high
Or humble vales would lure her from the way ;
Or wide and wild unrippled lakes expand,
Or vault-like forests frown on either hand.
From thence, beneath a grimly-visaged rock,
Long—long she trod an unenlivened way ;
Above her rose the jutting mountain scarp,
The desert's weariness around her lay.
No forest's green did cheer her failing hope,
No fountain o'er the breathless sands did play.
Soon, as her senses do with habit grow,
Strange sounds she hears, and shadows mar her view.

First, faint and undefined, the echoes swell ;
The sounds increase ; phantoms more firmly dwell ;—
Behold ! around her are the hosts of hell.

How weird the forms that fright her sickening gaze,
As, turning for relief, from side to side,
She views the hapless tenants of the place,
Who flee her eye, nor mark its pitying tide.
Unnumbered races—tribes diverse—unknown—
Here representing every sphere and zone,
United by the sympathy of crime,
By the dark bond of pardonless disdain,
In miserable fellowship of pain,
Drag on the crushing weariness of time ;
Until the stones they turned from sin's high place,
And all the masses loosened in their race,
Adown sin's mountain in long course have rolled,
Changing a peaceful to an angry world,
Till echoing strifes, and loud convulsions cease,
In th' lake of love, that girts the mountain's base.
Here, mourn the hosts who've triumphed in re-
venge,

Or, 'neath the stealthy moon, have given range
To the wild, uncurbed panther of their hate,
Who saw their vengeance slaked in victim blood ;
Now fain would they in silence darkly brood,
On th' ever-changing terrors of their state ;
But cannot, for the haunting phantoms dire,

Of victims and their blood, are ever there,
Piling upon their souls slow, torturing fire.

Yon leering group, with rolling, fiendish eye,
Seeming each object of its view to fly,
As conscious, though in hell, of low degree,
Are the cold devotees of *treachery*.
Beside them, with the stony smile of guilt
Concealed, behold the hollow *hypocrite*.
Here, the wan murd'rer stalks, and, from his hands,
Strives vainly to remove the ghastly brands
Of the foul deed. "What, are ye still the same?
Oh!" and behind him hides his load of shame.
Akin to him, the miser's clutchèd hands
Rob the gray hairs from his own beastly cowl,
In fierce remorse. But lo! no hell-doomed soul,
In all that group, hath come from savage lands;
No darker shade degrades those brows so fair;
"Christian" and "Jew" alone are branded there.
And, strown through all the barrenness around,
Along the lurid heights, and sultry wastes,
No sounds arise, save desolation's groan,
Which finds no echo but from wretchedness.

But now the curtains, for a time withdrawn
From sad Manhatta's eyes, welcomed return.
The murd'rer, miser, once again are shades;
The shade to shadow—thence to nothing fades.

Again, beneath the mountain height she stands,
Again around her are the desert sands.
Not now, as then, hope ebbing in her breast,
For lo ! before her now the realms of rest !
Oblivion's dreary, cheerless vales are past,
Threading along the mountain base of Faith ;
Naught now remains but Hope's wild wilderness,
Blest prelude to the spirit land itself.
But when she fain would madly forward bound,
And, piercing, leave this tangled bar behind,
Before her rose the guardian of the ground,
A shaggy Nemean—monarch of his kind,
And, glaring, shook his locks of yellow mane,
Eyes flashing sparks, and nostrils breathing flame.

With silent majesty, and that high mien
With which God crowns the despot born to reign,
He rears, across her quick, recoiling way,
The passless barriers of his breast and eye.
Vainly she would retire, and strive to gain,
By path circuitous, some point exposed.
Thither the sentinel appeared—the same.
On place, nor task, his flashing eye e'er closed ;
But, summoning at length each vital force,
Forth from the deepest caverns of her heart,
And hurling it, in quick and fiery course,
Through her nerved limbs, to every vital part,
Forth from the ground a pliant reed was torn,

Bound with a cordon of her flowing hair.
A smaller still was barbèd with a thorn,
And, with a feathery helm, was launched in air.
But, in the hostile breast, no home it found,
It pierced as naught were there, and fell beyond.
O'erjoyed, she bounds apast the harmless shape,
To regions of perpetual flowers and spring.
'Twas branded "Fear," that doth on hope await,
To courage, naught—to cowardice, a king.

ARGUMENT.

Description of the spirit-land, or land of dreams. An aged chief, who bears the signs of captivity, musing upon his misfortunes. A pleasing maiden, won by his venerable appearance, is interested in his history. He commences to unfold it. His knowledge of a former superior race of people, existing upon this continent, had impressed him with a desire to elevate his race and age. His knowledge is derived from a tradition, which he alone knows, and which he proceeds to tell as the "legend of an unknown race." The legend gives rude conceptions of a higher civilization passing away, and being overcome and supplanted by a lower, but concludes with an imperfectly developed prophecy that the lower shall again give way to a higher. The knowledge of this fact had come to him also in dreams. Hence his desire for the elevation of his race. In the midst of the prophecy, he discovers that the maiden is his daughter Manhatta. He then proceeds to unfold to her the treachery of his brother, Wahound, now the chief of his race, the Shattauchs, which he became by betraying Nappekamah, during a battle, into the hands of the Iroquois. After dimly foreshadowing events of much import, which were soon to take place, Nappekamah vanishes;—the vision closes. The land of dreams recedes, and Manhatta awakes in the mountain bower, in the presence of an Iroquois.

CANTO SECOND.

THE SPIRIT-LAND.

Unto the Indian is a land revealed,
Behind the western hill or sunset field ;
Far from all ills, all dangers, and all fear ;
Far from the pale face—to the red man near.
The Christian knows it not : the heathen dreams ;
And lo ! on every side its bowers, its streams.
There briefly may he stray, and pass the hour
Where, through the heaven of joy, no cloud doth
lower ;

May clasp a mother in his doubting arms,
Whom, in the tear-wet grave, his love had lain ;
May find a father, freed from war's alarms,
Whose unknown relics whiten still the plain ;
Or she her brave, who mourns a widowed bed ;
Or he his wife, whose wife is with the dead.
The infant, too, as if 'twere but a dream,

Wakes from the leprous couch, and meets his sire ;
Or nestles in his mother's arms, the same
As when in death he sank—so frail, so fair,—
The same, his angel face and clustering hair.

How lovely is that land ! E'en when the sun
Collects the purpled beauties of the dome,
And weaves them grandly 'round his sunset throne, '
We say, how lovely is his course now run.
But this is to the spirit-land the dawn,
So cold and gray no seraph there admires ;
Mortals know not the splendors of its noon,
The gorgeousness when day puts out its fires,
And, 'mid eve's blushes, to her couch retires.
And e'en when storms break o'er the troubled lea,
No angry terrors dwell upon the blast,
Nor flaming glare shivers the mountain tree ;
Like rolling strains of heaven's minstrelsy,
The swelling, thund'ring note of harmony
Rolls on to power—then lulls and dies away.
The red man loves its tones, and weeps when they
are past.

And there the sportsman, with his trembling line
Cast in the placid lake, beguiles his time ;
Or hunter wanders through the echoing wood,
Without the heart to draw upon his prey ;
So sweet the music of the solitude,

He cannot call one swelling note away.
Here, too, the lover seeks the fragrant bower,
And waits the widowed maid, who mourns him lost;
Or gentle dalliance whiles away the hour
Of sachems ever brave, and virgins chaste.
Ev'n yon old pine, that towered in the heaven,
Till, by the forkèd light'ning, scathed and riven,
Still lives and towers in that land of dreams;
Ay! and the faithful hound, that watched the while
Above the slumb'ring features of a child,
Still, at its foot, pours forth his sorrowing moan,
Nor leaves the charge until the sire's return.
Long years may pass ere he in battle falls,
And from his charge that faithful mastiff calls.
Earth's every mountain, by convulsion rent,
Or by the storms of centuries laid low,
Still reigns there in its full and vast extent;
The same deep fires are in its bosom pent,—
The same bold floods adown its surface flow.

Here 'neath a shadow, where a scented pine
Sends its ambrosial fragrance far and wide,
To blend with winds that sweep the burdened vine,—
And zephyrs, laden with the perfumed tide,
Outpoured from never-fading flowers around,
That deck the winds, the forests, and the ground,
Reclines an agèd chief, in thoughtful mood,
A courtier, as 'twould seem, of solitude.

His wrinkled brows, now furrowed by the cares
Which there have sat impressed for many years,
Are resting on his strong hand tremulous ;
And though, by thoughts that in his bosom throng,
'Tis heaved with grief's low sigh, and sorrow's groan,
No anger traverses his brows along.
And almost as a maiden, at the base
Of some high, venerable precipice,
Relieves, with smiles, the lone rock's rugged face,—
Even so the Indian's kindly eye did seem
To cast forth, from beneath his brows, a gleam
Of quiet hope, and endless faith serene.

He had been tall, and in each grace exact
To perfect symmetry. His form, compact
With swelling limbs, deep marked and muscular ;
And nerves and sinews, that the shock of war
Might strike, but only as the child's caress :
Perchance more gently, and would move them less.
But now, with age his noble form inclines ;
Disease is beating down his tottering limb ;
Care, on his brow, hath written painful lines ;
His hair, that white as driven snow hath been
For many years, is falling now as thin.
But ah ! not age alone, disease, nor care,
Have blanched to snowy white his raven hair,
Or eaten down those lusty limbs thus bare,
Or left that tomb of ruined vigor there.

It is vile slavery's bond that binds him down
(And ever tells him so) on captive ground ;
And though to realms of dream-land he repair,
Pow'rless to hinder—still it haunts him there,
And rudely fills its long and deep-worn scar.
But now, approaching by yon avenue,
With roof on roof of waving leaves thrown o'er,
(These, borne on columns tall of elm and yew,
And other wealth of careless nature's store,)
A maiden step—now serious—now gay—
Bounding or slow, relieves the shadowed way ;
Where slumber spangled dew-drops at noon-day,
And stars of night within each pearly spray.
Now, wild in joy, she carols gayly forth—
Now sadly drops the tear of broken mirth ;
Heedless, she plucks the flowers, where heedless
 strown,

Or wins from sombre scenes their sombre tone.
'Thus she, in beauty's changing phase arrayed,
Like rainbow hues, would brighten but to fade ;
The present charm still lovelier than the past,
And each by each successively surpassed,
'Till e'en the very changes seemed to note
How vain the strife to hide the sky of hope,
That smiling, fills the gaps which storms pass by,
And, when the eyelid weeps, usurps the eye.

Thus too the half-awakened chieftain mused,

And from his revery to the maiden turned ;
And, save in war—though he was long unused
To feel how hearts may throb, and bosoms burn—
Her image led his half self-flattering eyes
Back to the morning of his youthful days,
When love's rich springs, forth-gushing, bore his
heart

To one who seemed so much her counterpart ;
And whose loved face and whose the self-same form
So seemed before his waking eyes to start,
That he did rise, and instant toward her dart—
But pausing mused, in manner half forlorn,
Like one from 'pleasant fancies rudely torn.
“ 'Tis like her, as to-morrow's moon to this,
Yet unlike as the full is to the waned.
Now must I yield, she was but comeliness
Beside the fays that dwell in spirit-land.
With what sweet tendrils of affection, cling
The flowers around their well-beloved queen,
Who, true to nature, hath no other task
Than brightest flowers, 'neath vulgar leaves to mask.

“ Oh ! that I were a sighing youth once more !
How might my bosom heave with tender pains,
As't ruled love's lion, with unequal reins,
Within this breast—where fall my cold locks hoar,
Like snowy spray upon the rock-bound shore.
But now, as 'twere too much a paradise

To plunge love's luring wave for such a prize,
And since he e'er must love, that e'er dost see,
Let mine a father's love and passion be.
Father!—the sound hath in't a holy spell;
Dear are the mem'ries that around it dwell.
It tells me, I *was* father to a child;
Once was—and there it leaves me, to run wild
With fears, and doubts, and dread anxiety,
Which add to naught save my own misery.
Ah! none know pain, but those that feel his pangs,
When, like a leaden load, with serpent fangs,
Dull time upon the wearied captive hangs;
An alien from his country and his home,
Now unremembered at his own hearth-stone,—
Strange to his children—to his wife unknown."

Meanwhile, the mover of this revery,
A moment pausing, marked attentively
The agèd Indian's venerable face;
And then with kindly trusting, smile up came,
And, with a daughter's love, and nature's grace,
Kissed his gray beard, and asked his race and name,
And brushed away the tears that thickly came.
"Forgive these signs of weakened age," he said,
"Long lay their waters frozen in their bed,
And ne'er a sun of sympathy did shine
Till now.—And now, oh! sorrow's brine,
Rush forth in thy o'erflowing stream, for soon,

Since angels intercede, departs all gloom.
There, now I am refreshed. Pray, sit thee here,
Thus kindly by my side, where through the year,
And through the longest lapse of years untold,
Could I strange scenes of checkered life unfold ;
One for each dying hair that warms my head,
Or each cold grave, where sleeps the silent dead.”
“Long may I listen,” she returning said.

“A chief, by birth, and by my people’s will,
I mildly ruled, ’twas said, yet warred with skill.
T’ impugn my aims at least, none durst engage,
They were to elevate my race and age.
For I had heard—briefly I’ll tell it thee—
(For I alone do know the sadd’ning tale,)
A narrative, now hidden from the day,
Lest many hearing, many should bewail.
It is an old bequeathment of my tribe,
By turns the heritage of every king,
To all but him unknown ; and when he died,
Bequeathed and cherished as a royal thing.
But no !—now I reflect, the tale is sad ;
Youth’s pure prerogative is to be glad.
And though it seemeth hard that age should weep,
It is their lot as is the final sleep.
And what is ours to bear, must—shall be bliss ;
The spirit brings forth life—and life, distress,
T’ inter the still-born infant, happiness.

Not so the maid ; for throwing her fair arm,
In smile-compelling mood upon his neck,
He felt the magic touch his will disarm,
Nor need was there that she should further speak.

“No ! father !” and the mellow tones and rare,
Were borne and echoed, till the tuneful air
Seemed angel-children, chanting “father” there.
So sweet, upon her lips, they died away,
Seraphs might borrow of their melody.

“A father taught me that the load of grief,
Grows sweet when one may give, or find relief,
And that it balks the evil one, to know
His burden shared, and borne without a throe ;
While the Great Spirit, thrice tenfold, doth bless
Those who, a comrade’s running wounds to dress,
Tear from the cloak of their own happiness.

I pray thee, tell me all thy history—
Most, the tradition that hath guided thee ;
And, when thy changeful narrative is done,
I will narrate mine own—a stormy one.”
She ceased ; and the responsive, truthful moan
Of listening echoes, chimed “a stormy one ;”
While thus the chief, obedient to her wish,
Unwove the *legend of the unknown race*.

“Far—far as it is from the eastern shore
To a western ocean’s heaving roar ;

By the mountain and river-side, streamlet and plain,
God had peopled the land, as he pours the rain.

“The men were fair, and their brows were pale
As the snow-flake launched upon the gale ;
Their hair, curled, dark as the tempest high,
And their eyes wore the hue of their home, the sky.

“The women, more fairy than zephyrs of spring,
Were whiter than down of an angel’s wing ;
More radiant than stars in the deep azure,
They passed through life as stainless and pure.

“And that people were learned in the lore of the
sky,
And they counted the stars, as the heavens passed by ;
They delved ’mid the secrets that earth doth keep,
And knew the things of the fathomless deep.

“And when they would bound o’er the liquid tide,
A swan-like thing, with pinions wide,
And prows that walked through the snow-like spray,
Would unfurl, and bear them on their way.

“Oft the same white wings, that bore away
The youth, would return him aged and gray ;
And, dipping as proudly beneath the wave,
Would bear him back to his home and his grave.

“ Their warriors, mounted on battlements high,
Drew down the lightnings from the sky ;
And rolled them, in thunder, upon their foes,
Till there were none,—then sought repose,

“ While the reeds of their arrows, and strings of their
bows,
In melody sweet, told the grim battle’s close ;
And while wine lit the spark, amid bosoms of love,
And the raptures of heaven came down from above ;

“ Ah ! happy, how happy, that people were then,
Their hearthstones bliss, and their homes joy to
them ;
So long since the track of the foe had been seen,
That war was a legend, and battle a dream.

“ Like the darkening tempest, our rumor did frown,
With the roar of the whirlwind our people came
down :
As the pilgrim unhopeful, they sank to the earth ;
And we buried them up, and the homes of their birth.

“ Oh ! the blood of the noble was dung to the land,
And green rose the forest where red fell the hand ;
Their towns and their cities we strewed o’er the
plain,—
Yea ! we buried all else but the bones of the slain.

“ Like the vanishing rays, ’mid the shadows of night,
They faded by slaughter, yet fell not in fight.
Cold carnage inglorious completes the sad tale,
No shout of victorious, and no dying wail !

“ In quivering silence, they waited the blow ;
The agèd, the lovely, the lofty, the low.
The children of pleasure, neglected of pain,
Cried, ‘ to go ;—it is heaven ! we would not remain !’

“ So the murderous work dragged wearily on,
For that people were many—the labor was long ;
Till the streams ran red with its gory flood,
And the flint and hatchet were clogged by their
blood.

“ But, say you, that none there were, indeed,—
No band of the true, in this hour of need,
To bare their breasts, in defence of their homes,
And redeem their pains in their enemies’ groans ?

“ Small—small as the pebble at cataract’s base,
To the torrent that dashes upon its face,
One dauntless few made the foemen rue,—
The hearts they owned, and the breath they drew.

“ As the mountain wave beats on the rock,
As the ghost-spray flies up from the shock,—

So rolled we down on the little band,
So flew our drops to spirit-land.

“Bravely they fought, and exultingly fell,
And on each retreating inch did dwell;
As around them all were a magic spell,
And within them burned the fires of hell!

“With a cheer of despair they retired to their town,
And smiled as the foe-cloud darkened 'round;
And there dwelt, as dwelleth the drowning man
On his death-knit grip of the swimmer's span.

“We tempted them not to the combat again,
But reclining, like blood-hounds by the den
Of the prey that eludes their savage sense,
We watched by their walls in dark suspense.

“And the throne of the day many times gave its
light,
And the queen of the darkness illumined the night;
Many moons came and went—ay, like mortals away,
Yet those mortals remaining like panthers at bay.

“But, ere long, the twin brother of death is there,
The cold hand of famine now withers the air;
The furies of hunger flit through the dark streets,
And man covets the flesh of the fellow he meets.

“ For, behold ! the last ox, now led from the stalls,—
Each drop, how precious, of blood that falls !—
Is torn, warm and throbbing, from limb to limb,
For that still pulsing flesh, which is lifeless to them.

“ One, piercing his arm, did drink from the vein
The stream of his life’s warm blood again ;
And one gave his friend, in a vessel of gold,
The wine of his heart, to quaff ere cold.

“ But ah ! not yet had blank despair
Weighed down, nor famishment entire,
The sinking courage of those who had fought,
Where the mode of their deaths was the sole prize
sought.

“ Methinks I now see the brave that arose,
With the feeble, feeble strength, that flows
Through the bloodless veins of a starving man,
And, pointing towards our hostile van,

“ Did mutely wave above his head
The steel that oft in fight had led ;
And, at his beck, did gather around
All them that clove not to the ground.

“ Then out, from the opening gates, they rushed,
With the force of the bleeding bosom’s gush,

That spouts, and falls, and instant sinks,
And the sand its short-lived fury drinks.

“ Even so, from those walls, the streamlet ran,
To pile in stagnant death the land ;
They sank—they fell—and falling, turned,
And hurled the seething curse, that burned

“ Within their souls ;—and thus they died.
The breath was stilled, that had wafted the tide ;
Its waves were calm, and naught came to our line
Save a ghastly glimpse, or groan of the dying.

“ Short-lived was our triumph, and crippled our
cheer ;
For its tones had scarce struck on the ear,
When, as if earth and all the heaven
Were to the powers of darkness given,

“ From pole to pole, all flashed and blazed .
And then, 'mid night's intensest maze,
To tunes of such fierce thunders rolled,
As ne'er before God's power told.

“ Then, from the lurid, black'ning cloud,
That wrapped the earth in its rayless shroud,
And, high above the fearful gloom,
An immortal voice revealed our doom !

“ ‘Rue—rue, O conquering people, this day!
When the last of the pale faces passeth away;
And live, O conquerors! his life
Whose friends are foes, whose peace is strife.

“ ‘As the night, that stealeth at evening on,
And stealeth away at the early dawn,—
So o’er the land have the red men come—
So vanish they with the rising sun.’

“ He ceased; and as heaven and earth again
Grew calm, we turned to the once glad plain.
The spirit had hollowed and covered their grave,
For deep they lay buried beneath the wave.

“ And that wave yet rolls in the far-distant west;
And full oft, as I’ve wept on the sorrowful breast
Of Jadagua, or the lake of death,
I have dreamed ’twas the place where the legend saith

“ The last of that people lived and died.
I have wept o’er their fall, in the flush of their pride;
And I’ve wept o’er the red man’s solemn doom,—
To vanish, like shadows of night from the sun!”

He ceased; and, sadly sweet, the tears stood by,
To usher sorrow to the maiden’s eye.

He wept for grief, and she for sympathy.

"Blessed these tears!" she smiled; "that angel's
garb,

Who takes away the arrow and the barb!"

"Oh! would,—I ask no more," the sire replied,

"Each barb might follow with this gushing tide.

But no! within me, one must mould and rust,

Till it and I are mouldering in the dust.

Thou knowest it not. 'Tis meet that none should
know.

'Twould make thy bosom chill. Thou could'st not go

Back from the land of dreams, to that of cares,

To smile again, if thou didst know th' affairs,

Which now are driving, 'neath the storms of fate,

Upon our shores. Whereby our race and state;

Thy tribe and name,—and father, if thou hast;

Thy friends and foes, if aught thy foes can last,—

Shall be like summer's flowers, that pine alone—

Few, pale, despised—when autumn's winds have
blown.

Thy village, or thy wilds—thy lovers too,

(Each youth that steals of thee one passing view,)

Even I, who love thee to the full degree,

I could my only daughter, were she thee,

And thou that sweetest bud on Shattauck tree,"—

The maiden started from her reverie,—

"Even Manhatta, ever in my eye,

And ever stealing on my memory.—

Hold ! why ! art fainting ? I have broke the rest
Of some thoughts fawn sleeping within thy breast.
Why this embrace ! and wild excess !—oh why ?
Art thou—” “ Even so !” she cried.—“ My child,
my joy !

Oh ! let an old man clasp thee to his heart—
An agèd father bathe thee in his tears !
Oh ! let him press thee, and forget the smart—
The wrongs, the tortures, and the pangs of years !
But blessed be heaven, and blest be earth, and thee,
In that I finished not my prophecy !”

Long time upon his pillowing bosom lay
The sobbing daughter ; then, in child-like way,
Arose, and fondly stroked his beard and face,
And sowed her kisses in the furrows there,
And clasped his great hand in the soft embrace
Of her small fingers—wound them through his hair,
And flung its white spray o’er her own dark waves,
And wildly talked of hours of young delight
To be renewed ; and all things, as in flight,
Went o’er, up to her dream of yester-night.
Then, as inspired with calmness from the graves
Of Stoic fathers, said, “ They call thee knave,
And taunt me with ‘ Thy sire betrayed the brave.’ ”
“ And didst thou e’er lose faith in me ?” he cried.
“ Never,” in ringing tones the maid replied.
“ My child, thy faith is just. Thou hast done well.

Tell me, if not in one—not even in one—
Thou hast had faith, of all the tales they tell?"
And still her lips with "never" sweetly rung,
And still he wept, "Thou hast done well—done
well."

"But now, my child, the swift returning streams
Of human waters, from this land of dreams,
Warn us, unwilling, of the approach of morn.
Hence must we tend full soon. Ere the first horn
Of the shrill bird of morning call us hence,
I'd have thee give these words an audience.
On that eventful night, whose dawn beheld
Defeated every hope that in me dwelled ;
Saw me a prisoner by a hostile fire,
My liveliest trust immediate to expire ;
That night, when first was trod by hostile van
The peaceful valley of the Nepperhan ;
When battle, on our lurid hills of snow,
Painted defeat in slaughter's horrid glow,—
It was a *Shattauck* struck the Shattauchs low,
And gave their chieftain prisoner to the foe,—
Traitor and *king* were one from that one blow.

"But further mark. Oft has yon nightly queen
Walked in full glory to the honied west ;
Oft has she risen, pale and dimly seen,
To wend unnoticed to her lonely rest ;

Oft have the seasons trod their circles 'round,
And strown their varied gifts o'er all the ground ;
Yet years, like clouds, have vanished into air,
Till Hope's poor grave seems filling with despair.
My limbs, for signs of honorable war,
But show where fetters leave the ignoble scar ;
My only joy, to muse upon my woes,
And wish a troubled life might find a close ;
My fate reserved, in torture to expire,
Amid my groaning town's funereal fire,—
When fate may fill the cup of hideous joy
For hell's foul fiends, or worse—the Iroquois !
Yet have I hope. Strange things of late I've seen
Within the mazes of the midnight dream.
Even now they come—they tread upon our shore ;
Soon shall the Indian rest, nor feel his sorrows
more."

A dimness gathered o'er Manhatta's view ;
It seemed her father, by some horrid spell,
Were fading from the tight embrace she threw
Over the form of him she loved so well.
With arms outstretched, she sought to stay him there,
But graspèd nothing—save the still night-air.

O'er regions vast, with dizzy swiftiness borne,
As when doth close some dream of fearful power,
So seemed her course ; till, with a shriek and moan,

She woke upon her couch within the bower.
The morning sun, in floods of silvery sheen,
Bathèd the dewy woods, and shone between
Their tops, that swayed with slow, majestic mien.
The white clouds swiftly plowed the azure wave ;
From each green bough the birds their carols gave,
In sweet devotion for their morning joy.
Before her, with the dark, portentous gaze
Of fierceness, mixed with yet more dire alloy
Of admiration, in his savage face,
A towering Indian stood—an Iroquois.

ARGUMENT.

SCENE FIRST.—*The Preparation.*

Night in the highlands. Wahound lights a signal upon a mountain, at which the Iroquois swarm forth for an incursion into the Shattaук nation. Wahound among the Iroquois.

SCENE SECOND.—*Wahound.*

Scene returns to Manhatta in the mountain bower. The design of the Iroquois chief, Ossiniug, frustrated by his death, at the hands of Wahound. Dialogue between Wahound, the traitor, and Manhatta, who charges him with treason. Wahound freely unfolds his treason, both against Nappekamah and against his own subjects, the Shattaуks; and as he is about to slay Manhatta, receives himself a wound. She flies for the cliffs of the palisades. Her flight is successful.

SCENE THIRD.—*The Ambush.*

Life and its ills. Adversity. War. A midnight scene of peace and quiet interrupted by the warwhoop and the din of battle. The contest. The morning. Manhatta, bound to a sacrificial altar, utters a mournful dirge over the fallen fortunes of her countrymen.

CANTO THIRD.

SCENE FIRST.—THE PREPARATION.

WHERE the hoar summits of the highlands rise,
Towering to heaven, and leave the vapory
And mystic shroud, which, like a mantle, lies
About them, or a mountain drapery,
That falls and winds, in graceful folds, around
Its godlike wearer,—on a gentle mound,
Whence roamed the eye, in lengthy circuit, 'round
The black horizon—one lone savage stood.
Nor—looking forth upon the twilight wood,
Or moonlit hill, or where the river wound
Its course—might other moving thing be found.
He was alone. Save where the thin smoke curled,
Like lingering spirit o'er its native hearth,
No sound of life went up from all the earth,
Or broke the stillness of the sleeping world.
So, like an infant, earth unconscious lay,

The fitful moon would from her coverts come,
And view its face of smiles ; then turn away,
As if it loved not what must soon be done,
And wished some other lamp might light the way.

His form, not large, was cut with those thin lines
In which the sinews of the panther meet ;
And stealthily, as down upon the winds,
Trode the rude earth his silent, trackless feet.
His visage, dark, unpromising, and low,
Seemed a fixed grot, from whence his serpent eye,
With sudden dart, or warily and slow,
Gleamed forth its snaky glance unceasingly.
No other vesture rustled with his tread,
Than one black raven feather from his head ;
And the few folds, that, hanging from the belt
That bound his waist and hatchet, formed his kelt.
Else was he clothed but in the native dress
Of wiry subtlety, which wrapped him 'round,
And seemed of cloaks to be the fitliest,—
As thus he mused unto himself : “ Wahound !
This night thy net is in the rapids. Wish—
And ere the morrow's gray hath tinged the hill,
All thou hast sought is fluttering in the mesh.
Falter ? ay, when the wolf deserts the rill
Which gushes from the lamb, nor drinks his fill.”
This said, he stooped ; and o'er a gathered pile
Of blossoms, fallen from the neighboring pines,

And inlaid with their nut-brown leaves, the while
Strikes from his flint the infant spark. It shines
Now feebly ; but anon it firmer glows,
Till far and wide the blazing beacon shows.

A moment passed. Wahound, with shading hand,
Vainly above his gathered brows upraised,
On every side the veil of darkness scanned,
But only darker grew its thickening maze.
Not long was he to disappointment doomed.
Soon, from a far-off mountain's sullen gloom,
An answering blaze, with its returning light,
Alarms the holy quiet of the night.
Anon another, and another gleams,
In quick, successive streams—now here, now there—
Till all the night is marred with lurid beams,
Waking the slumbers of the moonless air.
Then, plunging int' the thickest of the wood,
He swiftly threaded on his tortuous way,
Like some dark viper of the solitude,
Stealing the march upon his slumbering prey.
As wound his path adown a steep ravine,
Wherein a gentle, gurgling streamlet flowed,—
O'erhung with many a fragrant evergreen,
That cast on darkness' self a heavier load,
(So dense the night, that scarce a glimmering ray,
Through the thick trees, assured his doubtful way,)
He paused to note, if, from a single source,

One beam of light streamed in upon his course,—
And noted none. A moment—and there shone
A hundred points amid that forest lone,
A hundred arrows swiftly leaped to rest,
And had as quickly sought his beating breast ;
But all as quickly backward did rebound,
And as he uttered, darkness reigned around
The talismanic words, “ I am Wahound.”

Again, as issuing from the solitude
To some sweet village, by the soft night wooed ;
Now from her slumbers woke, in hurried mood,
Her braves in groups partaking hasty fare ;
Her wives and daughters, with unceasing care,
Plying their tasks, and pointing to the glare
Of beacons on the hills, with many a fear,
And many a smothered sigh, and stolen tear—
“ A foe ! a spy ! ” they cry, and swift pursue,
And upward come ; but bow unto the ground,
As strikes upon their ear and trembling view
The name and presence of the chief Wahound.
Or lies his course along the mountain side,
Or through the echoing glen, or surging tide
Of the unresting Hudson—king of streams—
Or the soft vale,—all—all awaking seems,
In this dread silence of the midnight hour,
From peaceful rest to raging thirst for war.
By hamlet lowly, and by birchen hut,

Are groups of warriors. From trees, and caves,
As from the womb of earth no longer shut,
Pour forth a myriad host, as if the graves
Gave up black, fierce, and hideous Indian braves.
Hither, they gather in their diverse clans ;
Thither, are running wildly to and fro ;
While weird old hags employ their busy hands,
In adding to their tall, gaunt forms, a glow
Of many-colored fiendishness,—such show
As scared themselves, and well might shock a foe.

With slackless pace, Wahound pursues his ways ;
And ever and anon a savage joy
Steals o'er him, as at each successive phase,
Swells the deep tide of stormy Iroquois.
As, when in autumn, from the west and north
The marshalling winds their tempests muster forth,
Which rolling, heaving, and condensing form,
To shake the earth with their descending storm,—
So from the hills the human clouds descend.
The same grim silence doth the hosts attend,
And all as fearless seems their angry mood
To fire the heaven, or the earth to flood.
What power of grace may stretch the saving hand,
To ward destruction from the Shattauck land ?



SCENE SECOND.—WAHOUND.

As when the timid, tender, gentle fawn,
Of trembling limb, and love-imploring eye,
Might ope his dewy-covered lids at dawn,
To meet a panther lying couchant by ;
Or grinning wolf, smiling with fierce delight,
At his poor victim to the snare of night,—
Thus seemed Manhatta, as, in quick alarm,
She did confront the stranger's towering form
With a wild consciousness of unknown harm.
As some broad-limbed, yet towering oak, might rise
Above the forest tops, and claim the skies
Alone as worthy to afford it home,—
So if, amid the crowd of men, should roam
That form, would all around, as to a king,
Give homage. Such the mien of Ossining.
Behind him, on the nearest sapling, hung
A bow, that never hand but his had strung.
The lonely wood, with sounding echoes rung,
As down upon the nearest rock he flung
A giant club, that, lost in battle's day,
Many would view, but none avail to sway,—
From each limb, where the tendons thickest swell,
Drooped waving festoons long of human hair.
And from his lion breast a black mane fell
Of gory scalps, whose much more recent wear,

With fearful vividness, the tale might tell
How many, by his hand, trod the dark dell
That leadeth down unto the wastes of hell.

As if unconscious, in his revery,
Of the poor bird that quivered 'neath his trance,
Who, willing oft, yet powerless to fly,
Durst not so much as shun his steadfast glance,
He stood for moments, and with raptured air
Beheld the half-veiled blushing beauty rare ;
Who, like the lily pale, with bended head,
Would, from the dews of admiration, shed
On her unclouded charms, fain turn away
To some sequestered refuge from the day.
The savage rose. She dreamed some wily craft—
Some dark design. His swift approach she heard,
And then the winging of an unseen shaft,
And then the savage weltering on the sward.
She saw him rise, and vainly strive to scan
His hidden foe, from the dark wood around.
She saw him grasp, in his impassioned hand,
The poisoned weapon, tearing ope the wound.
She saw the fearful agony of death
Blow in fierce blasts, his deep curse-laden breath.
She heard him heave the last spasmodic groan,
Then struggling, rise, and sink, and breathe the moan
Of death. She saw the film upon his eye.
She saw the strong chief like a dead clod lie.

And as she saw, she kneeled her down, him by,
And closed his lids, and wept there bitterly.
Oh, what to her the dangers she had past?
What her deliverance from his passion's blast?
What her redeemed fame and honor, cast
Against the living soul, that now hath past
Unto the spirit world? What counterpart
Hath nature moulded unto woman's heart?

Ere yet upon his quivering face, the tear
Lay chilled, of woman's ready almony,
A plastic voice startled Manhatta's ear,
And woke a flush of seeming hate or fear.
"What! hast Manhatta seen no enemy,
Till this huge, prostrate trunk of Ossining,
Meet that which enmity should ever bring
To every foe, that thou dost weep for joy,
When thou but see'st one slaughtered Iroquois?
Then hath the Shattaук name indeed grown poor,
Whose highest triumph is a fallen boor!"
"For joy, mine uncle?" spoke the tearful maid;
"Say not for joy!" again she, shuddering, cried.
"And dost thou then, with treasonous sorrow weep
Above this gory, cold, and lifeless heap?
Or," and his voice sunk to an adder's hiss,
"Hast thou that parent's ill-directed parts,
Whose trait'rous hand, in league with enemies,
Still strove to hold the loves of Shattaук hearts?

Beneath his bland brows venerably high,—
In his warm heart, and open, eagle eye,
Treason found home ;—so saith the people's voice :
And how else comes he with the Iroquois ;
O man ! O woman ! who can trust thy wiles,
When direst traitors wreath the fairest smiles ?”
Not longer o'er the dead, Manhatta wept ;
But, sending fiercely forth each fire that slept
Within her fair breast's citadel, she turned,
With eye that fearless flushed, and cheek that burned
At this black taunt, the living to defend.
Proudly she rose and stood—her grief at end ;
And, like some poor attire at will cast by,
Vanished all fear, all weakness womanly,—
Vanished the woman—save her dignity.

“ By all that's fair in earth, in heaven good ;
By the sweet naiads of this sombre wood ;
By Him, the Great Unknown, who knoweth all,
I here deny thy charges as they fall.
And by those holy quæstors, if thou wilt,
I challenge thee to prove my father's guilt.
Nay ! further. Whence thou cowerest, Wahound,
Lift up thy head like reptile from the ground ;
And, if thou durst, hiss forth thy best deny,
To ward my arrows, as they thickly fly
Int' the deep fortress of thy villany.
And, firstly, I would see and hear thee swear,—

Nay, I would feel the words thy lips pass by,—
That when thou call'st Nappekamah unfair,
Thou dost not know the thing thou say'st, a lie !
Swear, if thou canst, that when my father left
All that of earth he feared to be bereft,
No traitor's hand, by policy deep planned,
Gave him a prisoner to the foeman's band !
Swear, that the load is just, of blackening shame,
Which rests upon his memory and name ;
Or, if his treason was not born alone,
Nurtured and cherished, in thy bosom's home ;
And as it grew in strength and power there,
At last, by fraud, did wed the Shattaук throne,
Which still thy lust doth grasp. O traitor, swear !"
She ceased ; while widely on the ringing air
Were borne her accents, hurried, swift, yet clear ;
And distant echoes chiming, " traitor, swear !"
Fell, like ghost omens, on the chieftain's ear.

A time, with mingled wonder fixed, and awe,
The chieftain king stood bound as with the thong ;
Nor moved, nor spoke, nor seemed indeed he saw ;
Till, suddenly, in current deep and strong,
The life-stream, that did flee his veins but now,
Rushed in its flood-tide forth to cheek and brow,
And madly leaped his palsied limbs along.
Like mountain panther, goaded by a child,
Glared the grim warrior on Manhatta mild.

Ne'er gleamed, than his, a fiendishness more wild ;
Nor beamed, than hers, a more angelic smile.
High o'er his head the brandished tomahawk,
Glut with anticipated blood, he shook.
Once, twice, and thrice his arm its haste doth balk.
Ten thousand demons arm his angry look.
"Ha ! ha ! my maiden. Think'st it strange—ha !
ha !—

That I betrayed thy sire Nappekamah !
Know then, for the brief respite of thy life,
That not for one alone my plot is rife.
The Shattaук race, rebellious of my power,
Shall feed the fires of my triumphant hour,
Even as this proud rival Ossining
Hath fallen, like an eagle on the wing,—
His life-blood sapped by me, the traitor king.
Didst mark, I called him rival ? Be it known,
The Shattaук king hath sold the Shattaук throne ;
And through yon highland hills, I now deploy
Ten thousand allies of the Iroquois,
Like locust legions, ravenous to destroy."

No more he spoke. Ere half the tale was said,
The maiden's inmost heart bold purpose made.
Her tiny hands first trembled by her belt,
But trembled there not for the fear she felt.
Thence her small fingers pressed her beating breast,
But not to soothe a coward pulse to rest.

And thence her dark eye left the timid ground,
Not in petitions to the grim Wahound.
'Neath eye so dark, and hand so small, a gleam
A moment flashed as from a dagger's sheen;
The next, and like the arrow from the bow—
Or, as the hawk doth on its victim tilt,
She sprang within Wahound's unguarded blow,
And plunged the weapon to its gory hilt
In his broad bosom. But for answering gush
She waited not. Swift as a frightened fawn—
Or snake recoiling from its sting, she rushed
Away—away, o'er copse, and fen, and lawn,
To where the beetling precipices yawn.
She seemed to cast herself the winds upon;
And, as the dark scud flies before the storm,
Away—away before Wahound she flew.
Away! away! the savage doth pursue!

Oft, by its banks, I've watched the ceaseless flow—
Th' unresting toil of Hudson's mighty stream;
And thought yon crested wave, ages ago,
Gave pleasure to the savage; and its gleam
Shall flash on future ages, as on me.
Emblem of Life! wall-bound, and only free
To seek the ocean of eternity!
In it, no shallow streamlet hast thou viewed,—
No meager Rhone, or poor, though storied Rhine;
Or stagnant Thames, 'neath bridge and burden mewed;

Or listless Po—sleeping like all its clime—
Sunk in the filth of long corrupted time.
It is a river—nay, an onward sea,
Where leagues of waters roll at random, free
As are the wildest winds upon the lea.
It is a Rubicon, where gods might pause ;
A Hellespont, which few of men might dare ;
An Indus broad, where superstition's laws
Might furnish untold millions with a bier.

Upon its eastern shore, with gentle sweep,
Knoll upon knoll, and hills on hillocks sleep,
Till far away, with undulating rise,
Blend knoll and hillock with descending skies.
But in its western walls, how wild and strange
The contrast, shown unto its eastern range.
The watery plain but seems a lengthened moat
Before the line of castellated towers,
That, 'twixt the blue of sky and water, float
Like some stronghold of the ethereal powers.
No drawbridge stretches, or portcullis falls,
Save heaven's thundering clouds, across that wave,
To link the moat-side with the castle's walls.
They sleep alone, and sombre as the grave.
Approach with reverence and fear their feet ;
Look to the zenith for their rugged brows,
And, as their frowns go out upon the deep,
Dost wonder, that when there the savage bows,

Ascends along the mountain-side his prayer?
That, when sweet echoes lade the answering air,
He thinks a present deity is there?
Oh! wonder not. The Christian may not gaze
On those grim battlements, and turrets bare,
Nor feel the prospect in his bosom raise
The sentiment that Deity is there.
In but one point, they diversely compare:
Reason to him reveals " 'tis everywhere."

And now, before Manhatta's path, doth yawn
Those cliffs, ne'er threaded by the mountain fawn.
A hundred fathoms down the dizzy steep
The river's surges roll, voiceless though tost.
Between them and the rock beneath her feet,
All the abyss in mazy depth is lost.
Kneeling above the bold, extremest edge,
Where scarce the moss may cling to the smooth
ledge—

Her frail form trembling o'er the precipice—
She gazed, with reeling eyes, through vision's mist,
And thought she saw, slow-waving with the wind,
The swaying top-branch of a slender pine;
Whose towering shaft had upward climbed, and clung
Close to the rocky wall, till now it swung
Its tuft beneath the crag whereon she hung!
One look she cast—before, above, around—
Upon the abyss, on heaven, and Wahound!

A moment twined her trembling hands in prayer ;
One moment rung her wild shriek on the air ;
The next, and lo ! no quivering form is there !
The brink is tenantless, and cold, and bare.

The chief approaching, cautious pressed the rock,
And, kneeling o'er it, scanned attentively.
The pine a moment swerved, as with a shock,
Then rested ; and he rose and went his way.

SCENE THIRD.—THE MASSACRE.

Life is a sullen mountain-peak of ills,
Which to ascend our generation fills.
Infancy views, as from the plain afar,
Filled with a solemn blend of hope and awe,
Its crags sublime, and turrets tinged with blue,
Where richness—boldness bind the gazer's view.
Through midway clouds a dazzling path is given,
And every summit terminates in heaven.
Youth hails the dawning day. How full of light
Seems then his pathway, and how glistening bright.
Manhood toils bravely up the steep ascent,
Till pathway fades, and strength alike is spent.
Then turns, and finds his boyish hours, now past,
Pleasure's blest, fleeting, only hours, and last.
Again, with failing heart, by twilight chill,
He cautious treads along his path of ill.

As mountains past grow old beneath his feet,
New mountains rise, and with the heavens meet.
Dangers unknown around his pathway thicken,
By unknown foes his wearied form is stricken.
Voices unknown sing bodings to his ear ;
Untasted joys give place to unknown fear ;
The crevice yawns into a dark abyss ;
The beauteous cliff becomes a precipice ;
His feet, mistrustful, shudder o'er their way ;
He sees no hope above, around no day.

Anon, adversity's dark, gathering clouds
Murmur, like death exclaiming from his shrouds.
The storm-king marshals his battalions
To vulture's scream, and thunder's rolling drums.
The lightning's darts out from the gloom are hurled,
Like shafts of flame above a burning world.
The air grows cold, and piercing keen the wind ;
Sweet were those vales, with childhood left behind.
Nay ! blest is he, who, 'neath some favoring tree,
Or sheltering rock, on the low bended knee,
May crouch, weep, tremble, where he may not flee.
Such are thy stern behests—Adversity !
But who shall name that fiend, at whose command
Yawn hideous depths, t' engulf a smiling land !
When not around life's mount, its lightnings play ;
When not upon its skirts, its thunder rolls ;
But when its inmost fires burst on the day,

And awe-struck thunders list the echoing poles :
When dread convulsions tear agape the world,
And mounds and mountains, in like ruin hurled,
Announce that hell hath burst from bonds away,
And 'gainst its God its banner hath unfurled.
Archfiend, thy name is War !—hail ! demon, hail !
Not in thy crested plume, and glittering mail,
Be it mine to picture thee. No banners gay
Stream o'er thy path. No manifold array,
Moving with war's high pomp and majesty,
Prostrate their bloody offerings at thy shrine,
Or march to death, with step of faultless time.
Free from thy tinselled gaud and vanity,
Appear, O fiend ! in all thy damned deformity !

'Tis midnight. From the slumbering woods, no more
Are heard the boding owl, or fearful roar.
The insect's hum is silent in repose ;
The wakeful hare his trembling lid doth close.
The twinkling stars, that stud the heaven's con-
cave,
Smile on their image in the voiceless wave,
Where Hudson rolls—so silvery, calm, and even,
Beneath it seems a world—perchance, a heaven !
All undisturbed the placid mirror lies ;
A canvas, where repose doth paint the skies.
Each star is twinned, and sister moons are seen
In the mid-heaven and river glimmering.

Till when, perchance, some tenant of the deep
Upturns his silvered side with buoyant sweep,
Drinks from the floods of moonlight, in them bathes,
And plunges to his home beneath the waves,
While star-lit surges wend along to shore,
As golden seas, with gems besprinkled o'er;
And moons distorted, on each billow ride,
Like flaming petrels, a phosphoric tide.

Through that dark valley, where the Shattauck clan
Have slept from time beyond the ken of man—
Nor heard his shout, nor felt marauder's hand—
Wends the sweet current of the Nepperhan,
Like tearful streamlet of a maiden's ills,
That, falling, glistens on her bosom's plain;
Save that the one rests on the breast it chills,
The other flows and fades between the hills.
Thus sleep they now, down in the valley low,
Bathed in a flood of moonlight's richest glow;
And farther up upon the hill-side, where,
In dozy slumbering, moans the moonless air;
And far away upon the plain above,
Whence the sweet river seems so loath to rove,
But slowly lingers, as if chained by love
Around the foot of each celestial grove,
Till, of a sudden, broken is the sway,
And freely bounds the river on its way.
From the dark woods ascends the curling smoke;

The plain is black with thousand ga-no-sotes.*
But all around, so motionless and still,
Doth seem in silence held by fairy spell.
No watchers haunt the hillock's lonely crest ;
No wakeful guard patrols the barricade.
O'er all a strange and death-like slumber rests ;
All unrelieved by living sound or shade.
O night ! thou comest like a daily death ;
Thy dark wings hover over hill and heath ;
And earth's defenceless brood gather to rest,
As if beneath thee none would e'er molest.
The hunter thinks not of his distant home,
If fair above him shines thy starry dome.
Night, like the summons of the gentle grave—
Or comes it o'er the desert, or the wave—
Finds all lid-weary. All lie down at even,
To dream of brighter dawn and fairer heaven.

But doth no wakeful soul, in all that waste
Of hillock, wood, and town, and wilderness,—
No aching brain, where slumbers find no place,
Its vigils keep ? The night-winds answer, yes !
Listen, as from yon over cresting hill,
Rises upon the midnight winds a moan ;
Mayhap, a plaintive echo of some ill,
Which bears the mourner far away, to groan,
'Mid silence, solitude, and night, alone.

* Houses.

List, as it floats upon the night-winds free,
A sorrowing strain of birdlike melody.

“ Let me sigh a sigh for my native land ;
Let me sing one song to upbraid her ;
Let me raise one voice, and lift one hand,
To warn of the coming invader.

“ I have stood in her councils, and stood all alone ;
To her warriors and braves have I spoken,
That the hatchets of foes hung over her throne,
And the hatchets of friends were broken.

“ But my tale of treasonous truth they spurned,
Though the tale were a royal daughter's ;
Until all the fires that within me burned
Went out in sorrow's waters.

“ At the voice of a friend they blindly scoff,
In obedience to a traitor ;
That friend they have borne to the hillside off,
Where the fagot and stake await her.

“ With the morning sun, a lurid flame
Shall go up from the fagot and timber :
My spirit returneth to whence it came ;
My body is but an ember.

“The soul that would live ’mid her country’s shame,
Let no kind word defend her ;
Forgotten forever shall be her name ;
Let no kind friend remember.

“Let treason reign on the highest throne,
Let homage kneel around her ;
But let Truth away to die alone,
Where Bondage shall not wound her.”

The plaintive strain still trembled on the air,
Sweet as the harp’s last quaver lingering :
Anon ’tis lost in night,—but no ! for there,
And thither, and beyond, ’tis echoing ;
And every hill and valley seems to moan
The self-same plaint, and strike a kindred tone.
But now, from every circling hill around,
That on the vale of Nepperhan looks down ;
Now far beneath, within the slumbrous vale ;
Now on the shadowy outskirts of the town ;—
Hark ! whence doth come that wild, mysterious
wail ?

The sleeper, waking, starts. He waxes pale.
His lip, how livid ! Doth his strong heart quail ?
Terror interprets, but alas ! too well.
That cry increases, till the horizon,
In hideous discord, terrible and long,
From crag and forest, brake, and wood, and dell,

As if ten thousand warring fiends of hell,
In every brake and thicket-wood did dwell,
United, swelled the long, terrific yell !
As the near thunder, first with quick retort ;
Thence in a loud, re-echoing report ;
Thence gathering forces, as it onward marches,
Anon reverberates through heaven's arches,
And shakes the nether earth and cloudy deep,
Till one doth tremble, and the other weep,—
So rang that fearful warwhoop—cry of doom—
Out from the night's deep solitude and gloom.

Now wakes the slumbering night to life and death ;
Now flock the fiery demons of the air,
To fill men's breasts with their unnatural breath.
Wan Consternation runs now here, now there,
To seek for naught, and find alone despair.
Fear flees each way, to meet each way a foe ;
Danger and Grief confront their cheeks of woe.
Revenge uplifts his giant arm of strength,
And ere he strikes, rolls in his prostrate length.
Death, cold and still, stares up at the night sky,
Where pales the moon, and gusts go howling by.
While shout of triumph, shriek of agony,
Cry of despair, and yell of victory ;
And every battle's din, from far and near,
With clamoring crash of tomahawk and spear,
In overwhelming maze break on the ear,

From all the rolling, heaving, thundering plain,—
Alive with slayers, and gory with the slain.

O War ! when thou dost move thy legioned host
To battle forth—ten thousand as one man—
Dressed in thy pomp, and majesty, and boast ;
When, like the storm of heaven, thine onward van
Comes in its uniformity and power,
As all were moved by one immortal wand,
It is a glorious scene and fearful hour.
But when thy savage deluge sweeps the earth,
And hordes of untamed demons, thirsting blood,
Pour forth, to glut their fierce and hellish mirth
Each to the promptings of his bloody mood,
Upon the hoary locks of godlike age,
And on the innocence of infancy ;
When loveliness escapes the slaughter's rage
For the one only greater cruelty—
Then art thou devilish. Thy horrid spell
Stalks forth where meads and lovely flowers dwell,
And burns them up as with the flames of hell.

'Tis morn—without its gladness. Halting, slow,
Burns in the lurid east, with angry glare,
The sun's vast conflagration ; till the glow
Fills, with its dubious light, the morning air,
Until the clouds, that rise from slumber there,
Their varied robes of flaming brightness wear.

The o'ershadowed vale, where late the tide of war
Rushed on in deluge fierceness, now is still.
Along its hills, and o'er its plains afar,
All heavy with fatigue, and glut with fill
Of spareless slaughter, lo ! the victors sleep
In sweet repose, like infant slumbers deep ;
Though scarce the gore hath from their hatchets run,
And scarce they've thrown their weary limbs adown,
In midst of many a silent ghastly heap.
While clouds of smoke drift from the smould'ring
plain,
Like chariots of the spirits of the slain ;
And save where slowly up they wend to heaven,
Veiling in sombre shroud the dead and living ;
Save where the river drinks its tribute flow,
And ripples on in red and horrid show,
All still and lonely is the scene around—
All lifeless, motionless, in silence bound ;
As when last moonlight, hovering o'er the town,
Plucked her dark breast, and strewed the darkness
down.

High on the summit of yon crowning hill,
Which yesternight moaned with a tale of ill,
Spoke, as by maiden's lips, and meekly told—
A pile is laid ; such as, in days grown old,
Many were wont to ascend, in pangs to die,
For their good faith to truth and liberty.

Or such as that, on which it once behooved
A goodly man, to place the child he loved ;
And dream, while he was rent with agonies,
A holier Father smiled beyond the skies.
Or on which, with like phantasy possessed,
The Hindoo widow seeks a dear-loved breast,
Amid exultant pangs, and tortures dire,
Her love to testify, and seal with fire.
But whose the form, that by this dread ordeal
Her love for truth or tribe is doomed to seal ?
Or who so basely either could betray ;
Who stoop so low in fraud and treachery ;
Who hath, by others' vileness, or his own,
So damnified his name—his soul so cursed,
That may no more be spared existence' boon,
Nor yield it up but in one way, the worst ?
Manhatta, lo ! Child of the Shattaук king !
Her queenly form distorted and in bonds—
Like the snared bird, of broken heart and wing,
Whose lids are heavy, and whose soul desponds.
Sweet to her lips the coming draft of fate !
Sweet to all lips, when hearts are desolate.
She can but writhe beneath her load of grief ;
She can but weep, nor weeping find relief ;
She can but clasp her hands in mute despair,
Or move her lips to heaven in voiceless prayer ;
And, ever mournful, scan the reeking plain,—
A dirge half murmuring o'er the unconscious slain.

“ Where are my people—are there none to quail?
Have they fallen all? Are there none to flee or fail?
They have all gone, and but one is left to wail,
Crying, woe is me !

“ My chiefs are as the hunter, slain of his hound ;
And my braves as the autumn leaves, fallen around.
But, alas ! where my sire, or enslaved and bound,
Or dead and free ?

“ Peace to thine ashes, loved Nappekamah !
Peace to thy green graves, race of evil star !
May ye calmly sleep ! I shall not long weep,
Crying, woe is me !”



ARGUMENT.

The council hall. Description of the Iroquois sachems. The debate. Nappekamah and Manhatta, the captives, brought before the tribunal of the Iroquois. Speeches of Wahound, the captives, Wawayenda, and other chiefs. The sentence.

CANTO FOURTH.

THE COUNCIL.

THE hour hath come. The signal far hath rung,
Till back the palisades their echoes flung.
The council hall, in silence and with awe
Youth reverencing age, and age the law,
Receives those braves who may have won a place
Around the burning councils of their race.
The nation's prowess, age, and dignity,
Sit down at either side, leaving a way
Sufficient for the oldest counsellors,
Prophets, and warriors, and orators
To pass, as now, with kingly majesty,
They to the farthest, highest seats proceed ;—
Seats earned by many a deed of bravery,—
The prophet's aim—the soldier's highest meed.

And who are they that, one by one, ascend
The place of honor ? First, is Shandaken,

A northern chief, whose prowess long is past ;
Not so the cunning, faithful, deep forecast,
That holds yon stealthy step, and lights that eye,
Like the wild weasel's, sleepless still and shy.
Next, Shawangunk ascends ; the type of power,
And king of men, by nature's crowning hand :
In form gigantic, rising like a tower,
To strike with awe the common plain of man.
And with him Wawarsing—a brother true ;
Both the same milk from the same mother drew
In their wild childhood's home, where northern wil-
dren

Gave savage talents to the twin-nursed children ;
Of both of whom report gave current range.
To tales affirmed as no less true than strange ;
Which said, their parents had the last survived
Of an unearthly race of giant form,
That haunted, with existences long-lived,
Those northern mountains where the twins were born.
In former days, long lost to memory,
They were a race renowned—their numbers vast ;
But, as the leaves in fall, they passed away ;
Till many brothers, and a sister chaste
And lovely, lingered only of the race.
They born of light ! to whom the sun gave birth,
Still scorned to wed the children of the earth.
The maid was loved and wooed, but would not wed,
Taking each kinsman to an envied bed,

Till each in turn had lived, enjoyed, and died ;
And left the sister of their youthful pride
The last lone tenant of the mountain side.

There she, in barren loneliness, lived on—
Her beauty ravished, and her charms bygone—
Hid in a rocky fortress of ravine
Which foot of man had never trod within ;
And borrowing from those hard, cold, stony piles,
A face as hideous and devoid of smiles
As were the rocks themselves. Men lived and died,
And still she lived. The few that braved the tide,
And faced the torrent, and upclimbed the steep,
In hard pursuit of fleeing wolf or bear,
To where the hag had settled in her lair,
'Twas said were startled and confounded so
By her inhuman, savage, ugly mien,
The bravest quailed, and fled or fell below,
And never more approached the hag's ravine.
So, lone she lived, save one companion,
A mountain panther of gigantic mould,
Whom, in his infancy, she gave a home,
And nursed and reared, till, though grown old,
He left her not ; but, bound in savage bond
Of love, they dwelled together. Thus espoused,
The beast and bestial lived and died, unknown
Of men, within those walls which never housed
The form of a stray hunter. Whence came down,

When many a moon on moon had passed away,
Two fierce, inhuman forms, that loved the play
Of carnage dearly, and naught else beside—
The fear of foes, and of allies the pride ;
Where death seemed sure—wondrous the might required,
By greater danger were their souls most fired ;
Nor ever task was to their arms yet given,
From which they had with luckless arms arriven.
On lips of foes and friends, alike have rung
The names of Warwarsing and Sha-wan-gunk.

Next, Wa-wa-yan-da follows in the train ;
Tall as the beach, and graceful as the willow ;
A lip of smiles ; a brow of gallant vein ;
An eye whose glance seems that of love's dark billow ;
A form that rises like the aspen slender,
And every charm of youth hath Wa-wa-yan-da.
Little of valor boasts the graceful boy,
But all the royal blood of the Iroquois.
With him the nation's regent prince, Chenang,
Sits at the head of the imperial throng :
A chief unknown to tenderness or fear,
Of face ne'er visited by smile or tear ;
A lion eye, and brows retreating high ;
A mind well trained in arts of policy ;
Who can, by turns, stir up the inmost soul,
And marshal forth the passions at his will ;

Heave the strong breast, and make the big tear roll
With his impassioned eloquence, or fill
A nation's quivers with the darts of hate ;
Direct the ambush ; plan the strategy ;
Set on the hounds of war infuriate ;
Or, in the councils, as a magistrate,
Chain the wild furies that himself set free.

But time would fail the numbers to relate
Of those of various name, and grade, and state,
Who, in succession, fill the seats reserved
For those who most their country's weal have served :
To sing Oneda—bowed and agèd sire ;
Or Makamatam, filled with youthful fire ;
Can-nat-ti-e-go, " first-born of the mist,"
Which rises o'er that warfare in the west,*
Where seas still fall, and endless thunder rolls—
Earth quakes to heaven, and heaven to its poles,
To raise an incense, on which souls might soar
Nearer the power of God than e'er before.
Nor may we sing Kee-wat-a-goush-ka's name,
Though, as he wends along, the reverence plain
Which all do yield him, speaks him known to fame—
A king feared, loved, and honored in his reign.
His nation's wigwams love a stream far north,
Whose valley fails to hold its chieftain's worth ;
Where war is bleeding, and where danger bars,

* Niagara.

Kee-wat-a-goush-ka strays for fame and scars.
But last of all, in feigned humility,
Dost mark approach yon twain of modest men?
The first, a prophet-priest, Schenetalee,
Of wary glance and serpent eye; and then
A brother true, in form and outward mien,
With step unmanacled, and form unbound,
As free, and e'en as honored, it would seem,
As any there—the Shattaук chief Wahound.

The council opens. Mute the silence reigns;
Stillness on all hath cast its thoughtful veil.
A statued host of marbled brows contains
The thunder-storm, which yesternight prevailed.
Nor moves there aught of life within the place,
Save where from lip to thoughtful lip is passed
The holy calumet—the pipe of peace;
Whose smoke, each puff from various lips doth rise,
Yet risen, in one common cloud doth blend,—
Emblem of councils where the host advise,
And mingling plans combine t' the common end.
Thus in unbroken revery they sit
Till wreathes the last cloud from the lowest lip,
And blends its beauty with the cloudy heaven.
A moment passes—Prince Chenang hath risen,
And stretching forth his hand, converses with them:
“Sachems, ye are the bow across the heaven!
Our cloud hath darkened, and our storm comes down;

The earth is swept, as if by whirlwind driven—
Its snows are melted, and its dry leaves gone.
Oh ! sun of spirits, shine ! Our young buds broken,
Make green the land we've seen, and loved, and
taken.

In every breast let strife harmonious dwell,
And eloquence from every bosom well ;
Each freely speaking of our fortunes won,
And freely, too, what yet is to be done.
A Sundered nation waits in bonds without,
Whose fate will waver as our councils doubt.
The Shattauck king, and princess, too, are ours ;
Prisoners to us, are victims to our powers.
Children and brothers, ope your bosoms' doors ;
Stretch forth your hand on nation, princess, kings,
And name the fates which best befit the things."

The chieftain sat. Approving plauds went 'round ;
Not long they mused, nor were in silence bound.
As rears the springing lion from the brake,
Gloating upon the thirst it soon shall slake,
So rose Shawangunk, and thus boldly spake,
In tones which seemed with very power to quake :
" Brothers, Manitoe* giveth victory,—
For what, if less than vengeance, let me ask ?
We fought, and chose to kill them not ; but die
They must, or we but finish half our task.

* The Great Spirit.

Build up the fagot-piles on every hill,
All subtle poisons of the flesh distill ;
Let thorns their flesh, and flames their bones consume,
That every writhe may every pain increase,
Till comes slow death, like a long-envied boon—
The torment deepening till the pain shall cease.
From ancient springs the truth adown hath flown,
To you most horrid—amiable to me,
That the Great Spirit shall, to time unknown
And endless, burn them tenfold worse than we.
This, the true faith, did God to mortals send ;
Let men begin, then, what God will not end.”
Thus spake the warrior. All within, without,
From plauding murmurs swelled the sound along,
Till wood and forest echoed with the shout,
And every bondman felt his hour had come.
All forms seemed restless in th’ assembled throng,
That speedy vengeance should be straightway done,
When rose Schenetalee, with wisdom fraught,
And with the hand their listening minds besought.

“ Brothers and friends,—’Twere far from me to chain
The bounding panther of your long-grown hate.
I joy in hope to conquer the disdain
With which the foeman ever meets his fate.
Their pride to wound, and haughtiness abuse,
We’ll trust in safety to our wives and youths.
But that we burn not to regret the loss,

Thus injuring our policy and cause,
I would suggest we hush our nation's moan
For brothers slain and warriors lately gone,
In the ancient custom, to you all well known,
From all the prisoners our bonds are on ;
That we may braves, and braves their wives regain,
And Iroquois no longer weep their slain.”
This said, he ceased ; and slight applause they gave ;
But aged Oneda, like a following wave,
Came mildly on, and, with like prudence, sought
To smooth the sands by passion wildly wrought.

“ Warriors and brothers,—I have long been old ;
In youth I've acted, but with age I've learned.
When young, I shot my arrow, free and bold,
And glancing, it oft pierced myself : I've burned
A foe on piles so high and hot, a coal
Has fall'n within my belt, and seared my soul.
Oft many friends rise from a fallen few ;
The dead will raise no children up to you.
Scarce one will hate the hand that spares his life ;
But, slain, all join the evil spirit's force,
And aid our enemies in every strife.
It's little art to burn them. Do what's worse :
Make use of them ; not thinking it a lower,
But higher malice, which consumes the slower.”
He closed ; nor failed to note the glance of one,
Lit up with malice at his aged words.

No boiling passion of th' o'er honest soul,
But poison held by a snake-like control—
Whose hate now gleams from the unguarded eye,
And leaves it now in glazed stolidity—
Beamed from Wahound, as, with low reverence
And studied, artful phrase, he thus commenced :

“Sachems and brother warriors,—Poor the speech
I have to offer. Deeds and actions teach
But little oratory. Though my acts incurred
Have all been given you, and but my word
Remains, my love would add it to your store.
My brothers,—you do not forget of yore,
When Shattauchs rivalled with the Iroquois,
And I their prince was but an ardent boy,
I fought for power ;—’twas in Nappekamah :
I therefore strove with him—to no avail.
At last I gave him up to you in war ;
The battle hid it, and my mournful veil.
You bound him then ; have held him bounden still.
I speak to end a feud. Whose is the prisoner ?
You say, Wahound’s. My brothers, hear again :
Methinks a prisoner, who hath struck a friend,
Your laws unto that friend’s revenge consign.
Behold this stabbed and bleeding breast of mine !
It is my witness, and my oath shall swear
That while deep sleep was on me yestereen,
The squaw Manhatta struck the dagger there,

And from life's fount drew forth this murd'rous
stream.

Brothers, it pains me much to ask of you
To give me vengeance of a girl in tears ;
But ye well know what devils mar his view
Who fain would hate fair girls of tender years.
We chain frail women ; like a serpent's parts
We take their persons, but they clasp our hearts.
We ply our cords, but ere they're firmly bound,
Their cordlike length hath chained the victor 'round.
'Twould pain me more, if charms the devil lends
Should raise just love to war with just revenge.
I ask no more than what is mine, in sooth ;
What the law giveth, be it neither, both :
I ask them both—my brother and his child.
With joy of asking, how my brain runs wild !
Far be it from me their flesh t' economize,
I ask them as a glorious sacrifice ;
That, as their smoke and shrieks together rise,
The dead t' appease, and gratify the living,
Manitoe pleased, may smile on me from heaven."

Scarce had he closed, and dignity scarce served
To hush their plaudits where their passions swerved,
When rose Chenang, and briefly thus bespoke :
"Brothers,—Wahound hath given the cleaving stroke
To your just strife :—lay down the tomahawk.
But since he asketh by our ancient laws,

He will by them enforce his holy cause.
Let captives forth be led, their plea averred,
And, face to face, all accusations heard.”
“ Little I deemed,” Wahound, returning, said,
“ When with a foe I did alliance form,
And bared my agèd nation’s silvered head
To the cold beatings of your pelting storm,
My schemes matured should see myself unthroned,
And armed and pitted ’gainst a vixen’s tongue.
Is such the field whereon ye place Wahound?
Is such to be a chieftain’s battle-ground?
Take back the prey. I scorn the ground. I’ve done.”

And thus he might indeed have done, but he—
Wahound’s fair rival in all subtlety—
From love or hate, perchance or jealousy,
Thus spake—the prophet-priest Schenetalee :
“ My brothers,—Good Wahound hath spoken well ;
Such words as do the bold, blunt warrior tell ;
Unschoolèd in arts of eloquence, but deep
In noble honesty of purpose steeped.
Let us be wary. To our ancient laws
We owe our brightness, as earth owes the sun.
King, sachems, race, their mandate overawes ;
Day lasts but when they do our path o’ercome :
Night frowns o’er all when they but once have set.
Can he who hath to them appealed, have done ?
Can we now call on them, and now forget,

And call on something else? The die is cast.
Appeal is made. The word is gone—'tis past."
But now, as once before, a fiery gleam
Of bursting hate flashed from the galled one's eyes ;
As the hyena, close beset, is seen
To dart a glance of fury now where cries
Of pack-hounds greet him, now where rise
The rocky barriers to his further flight,
Without one den to give him rest or night.
But all in vain his wounded soul and pride,
The king hath said his saying shall abide.
"Lead forth the trembling chief and maiden young,
Each in this august court of sachems pleads.
May Heaven send their cause the moving tongue,
And God befriend who most deserves and needs."

Again the council-hall in silence sleeps ;
Each marbled brow unruffled as the deeps
Of ocean, when the carrier hath gone,
And breathless nature waits the coming storm.
Like vulture parents, bringing home a dove
To feast the savage nestlings of their love ;
Or the returning lion to his lair,
Fondling the poor kid with a mother's pressure—
Touching him tenderly, that he may bear
Him warm in life, but to be slain at leisure,—
So enter now a guard of stalwart men,
Rising like rocks in some dark mountain glen

Above a lily fading on its stem.
The guard retire, and fixed is each cold frown
Upon the drooping captive they have left.
Full of despair, with heart and head cast down,
Like the snared angel of its wings bereft,
Waking to find hell's horrid minions 'round.

She lay upon the cold, cold ground : her head
Supported on one hand ; and on her bed,
The earth, she gazed, as if she would not tread
Upon, but sleep beneath it with the dead :
The fingers of the other lightly held
A panther's robe, enfolding o'er her form ;
The fingers parted, and the robe half fell,
Lending her revery no chaste alarm.
She did a chiselled child of nature lay,
Differing from her as shadowed eve from day.
Each token nature lends to outward form,
To speak of inward grace and love, is there :
Her robes the clouds that lead our fancies on
To lands unseen than all we see more fair,
And part what we may know, and what desire.
But what recks she such human whims to-day !
Earth hath no charms for her, no winning breast.
She dreams of none for earth. Far, far away
From her foredooming judges, she doth stray,
In a wild, awful dream that has no rest ;
Through which she is by a black fiend pursued,

From death to death condemned, from each rescued
To meet a worse : driven from plain, mount, wood,
And brought at last to a dark judgment-hall,
Filled with her own, her father's, nation's foes,
Whose dark, grim faces are so terrible
Their fierceness wakes her, and her eyes unclosed ;
And for a moment throw a wildered stare
On them, and then fall back in mute despair.
The dream is real ; its last scene is there.
Oh ! is there not one breast by pity moved ;
One heart not with demoniac hate too cursed ;
One eye that turns away in chill disgust ;
One form with soul above the soulless dust,
In all that dark-browed and forejudging host ?

Now enter, slow, the swarthy guard again,
But with an aged, tottering form between,
Who strives to bear an upright step in vain,
But e'en must weakly on a foeman lean,
Though much he hates th' upholding arm I ween.
His whitened hairs stray down from his old head,
Apart his high, bald brows, and cheeks thin-lined,
Like the white harvest when its grain is shed,
And waving chaff speaks of a wasted time.
And all his form, once boldly, proudly great,
Is shrunk and wearied as his feeble gait ;
His eye, though bright, hath lost its ancient fire,
Like an expiring coal 'tis ashing over ;

His face, though firm, hath lost its ancient ire.
Ere death, death's calmness doth around him hover,
As if some unseen veil did o'er him cover.
As they approach, the maiden, in a maze,
Turns half abstractedly from naught to them.
She sees, but heeds them not, till meets her gaze
His scrutiny, on her intensely flashing ;
Then peering through dim hopes and thick alarms,
Her eager hand across her vision dashing,
She rears, and, pausing, darts one searching gleam.
"That face! that form! how strangely like they
seem !

It is—it is the father of my dream !"
She cries, and falls, and weeps upon his arms.

Not long their fond embraces may entwine.
The accused are called, and, smiling through the
grief
Which each in other's doubting face may find,
They nerve their souls with one draught deep and
brief

Of hate, held forth by every frowning chief,
Then arm in arm, they wait not, but demand
Who the accuser at whose charge they stand.
But what the blank dismay, the o'erwhelming pain
Of him—Nappekamah ; how, in deep shame,
Bowed his white harvest of gray hairs to earth—
Then heavenward clasped his hands in mutest prayer.

And his bright eye grew dim as with despair,
When rose the sharer of his very birth,
Alike of youth's embrace, and manhood's throne,
And thus addressed, in fierce, malignant tone :
“Wahound is thine accuser, and thy crime
Is this—I hate thee, brother ; and so well,
That all my life is harrowed by thy name ;
My heart hath festers in each burning cell,
And my whole soul is steeped in bitter gall ;
At thought of thee my brain runs wild, and all
My blood doth dance as at the battle's call.
Ay, I do feel that naught can quench my ire,
It burns my being with such horrid fire,
Save that myself should, with fraternal hand,
Inflict all tortures on thee that are planned
In hatred's black inventions. Ne'ertheless
Thou hast not injured me. In youth's caress
Thou seem'st to love ; in manhood's primal power
Didst share with me the glory of the hour.
Nor ever, from my prattling infancy,
Have I received one unkind cut from thee ;
And yet so hate thee, that my soul is dark
While yet thou seest light. The sun is black,
Whose beams must cheer thee in their joyous track ;
And heaven's sweet airs do fan my hatred still
When I reflect they thee with pleasure fill ;
And all that's glad poisons my soul with ill.
Such hatred without cause ! Whence hath it flown,

To mar my life and wither all my days,
But from some fiendish machinations thrown—
Some hellish charm, got by infernal ways,
Around my innocence—by thee, most foul
And wicked fiend ; seeming the while so chaste,
That angel's garb, rather than devil's cowl,
Thou shouldst be clothed in, to denote thy caste !
Such is thy crime : and as for thee, poor maid,
Whose rage with milder weapons was content,
Behold where late I would in kindly trust
Thy head, dissembling, on my breast have laid,
Thou, viper-like, didst thine own dagger thrust,
Bidding this red stream forth from the rude rent.
These are your crimes ; for these your blood I
claim—
Your groans, your ashes, and your rising flame."

In melancholy sadness, void of rage,
Nappekamah a moment stood, let fall
A tear, the weakness of both love and age,
Then stretched forth his hand upon them all,
And said : " Foemen ! I am an old hemlock ;
A hundred winters' whistling winds have rocked
My icy limbs : I'm dying at the top.
Stripped of my branches, and my power a spoil,
My wrecked, storm-beaten trunk 'tis meet should
quail.
Oh ! let it fall and sleep beneath the soil,

O'er which its glory did so high prevail.
But guard the tender bud which at my root
Thus beautifully clings in fondest love.
Ay, burn me to the ground, but spare the shoot
To spread its decent shade my grave above.
Nations shall hear the echoes of my fall,
Shaking the stillness of the boundless wood ;
But spare my offspring—my poor child—my all,
If but to weep amid the solitude."

These words, in pleading dignity he spoke :
Not so the maid, who instant silence broke,
And boldly cried, in tones unmoved by fear,
And rendered sweeter to the savage ear
By each defiant scoff she flung at them :
"Think not, each frowning fiend in shape of men,
That thou canst bend my knee to ask the boon
Of poor existence from thee. 'Tis not thine
To give, nor mine to keep, but his to hold
Who holdeth all. Slay me thou mayst full soon :
E'en then my life's not yours, nor lost, but mine,
Gathered securely int' the father's fold.
But on my father, venerably gray,
Once great in field, and wise in council now,
Shorn of his power and kingly majesty,
Oh, look in kindness ! Pity not, but bow
In reverence. See in his loving ways
His godlike eye, his countenance of grace,

The likeness good men bear to the Great Spirit's
face.

In what hath he offended—what the charge
Brought by his kinsman most unnatural?
Forsooth, that he was running o'er with love
Unto Wahound, who hatred did return,
And therefore must have witchery 'round him rove
To make him hate where utmost love should burn.
List!—is it witchery that chills my lip,
When I do of the poisoned chalice sip?
Is't witchcraft, too, that blisters in my flesh,
When I the twining, poisoned ivy press?
Is it some charm that makes the serpent sting?
Whom to my bosom's warmth I fondly bring?
Nay! so with men. For vileness hateth good;
Meanness, nobility; and traitors, brotherhood;
As serpents, men, by the great laws of God.
Ye hug yon wolf in brotherly embrace,
But presently his jaws shall yawn for prey;
His wiles shall snare ye, and his smiling face
Shall prove ye beasts before the open day.
Whom has he joined that he did not betray?
Where has he breathed, on aught he did not blight?
Whom has he fought for, that he did not slay?
The viper in your breast is growing strong;
He swells with pride, rolls his vile length along;
Ere long his fangs thy kindness shall requite,
And ye, like us, shall wither 'neath his blight."

These words still trembled on the air along,
Still did they quiver in their hearers' hearts,
When, from the centre of the nobler throng
That stood around the council-chief Chenang,
Rose and advanced a youth of graceful parts,
Elastic step, bold mien, and flashing eye,
Which for a moment to the maiden darts
Such glance as ne'er might present words employ;
A glance which was with wild surprise returned
By eyes that dimmed above a cheek that burned;
By lips that, trembling, muttered Uncas' name,
To all but one unheard—to him a flame
Of fire it seemed, kindling his inmost soul;
And like a stream which fain would hold control,
But bursteth by degrees from every bound,
So Wawayenda spoke to all around:

“Sachems and brothers,—To my cause give ears:
This old man loved Wahound in tender years;
First offered him the cup of fame to draught,
And held it to his lips till he drank half
Of all that was Nappekamah's. Are these,
Wahound, your proofs of direful witcheries?
Brothers, he hates the giver of his gifts,
Which, being inhuman, makes th' inhuman shift,
And charges witchcraft! Mark, his hate did fix
Not on the gift, but when the giving ceased;
So from the hand his food the panther licks,

And next the hand itself supplies the beast.
Look to thyself, Wahound—thou hast accused
Of love wrought hate—so monstrous is thy plea.
But were these doleful prisoners but loosed,
To hurl their thick indictments upon thee,
Thyself would quail before their truthful power,
As hares before the storm-swept forests cower,—
Flee like the sigh that stirs those very pines,
When heaven's thunders walk upon the winds.
Thou subtly hast dethroned them of their power ;
Blackened their fame in drear misfortune's hour ;
Ruled o'er their subjects only to betray,
And led them on where foes in ambush lay.
What might not these against thee truly charge,
Dissembling traitor, murd'rer, parricide !
False to thy kin and trust—to man at large,
And yet at thine accusal are they tried !
Who to his own was true, will be to us ;
Who to his own was false, most dangerous.
Transplant the apple on the wildest hill,
Its fruits are sweet as in its native shade ;
Grasped by the right hand, thorns will pierce you
still ;
Cherish a traitor, you will be betrayed !
Brothers and sires,—I thought I would not speak
The deeper argument which swells my heart,
As if it would with its full feelings break ;
But vainly would I act that cunning part.

Along with these poor captives let me bow—
Son of your king, and yet to be your chief—
Fearless, for both, my fond love to avow,
And hurl defiance at their foeman's teeth.
Long since, when I was but a tender boy,
Some venturous warriors of the Iroquois,
A little band, that scarce might hope to save
Ten of their number from a fiery grave,
Came down in silence 'neath the darkened moon.
Where slept the Shattauchs strong. I with them
came.

For weeks, like wolves, we slept away the noon,
And prowled by midnight—but despaired our game.
Howe'er, at last an over-trait'rous youth—
Now yon trust-worthiest, gentlest lamb, Wahound—
From hate of tyranny, or love of truth,
His brother Shattauch, upon Shattauch ground,
By our rude ambush and a skirmish brief,
Gave in our hands—Nappekamah his chief.
But also know, that, for this captive king,
A captive prince you lost by Shattauch power,—
That power which still around this maid doth cling
Like some high cliff, bearing aloft a flower :
I loved yon captives from that very hour.
Oft in my passion's ardor, when a boy,
I doffed the raiment of the Iroquois,
And, 'neath the garb of Shattauch and the name
Of Uncas, sought and fondly wooed the maid.

Her heart is mine ; her hand I dauntless claim ;
I fold her to my breast—my love, my bride !'
I stand her champion, and whate'er betide,
Though kingdom, honor, life, in dust be laid,
Who strikes this girl through me shall send the
blade."

He ceased ; and silence o'er their host prevailed,
Upon their brows sat stern decision fixed.
The captives forth were led, to be assailed
By savage scoffs, and yells, and curses mixed,
In such infernal roar and horrid burst,
As hungry wolves around the fallen doe
Might raise, if gifted with the power to curse ;
Else like naught earthly—unlike aught below.
Heedless of all the rage around them spent,
Their thoughts and eyes on other scenes were bent.
They thought of heaven's great sunlight growing
black ;
Of a vast night unlighted by a star ;
Of a dark cloud falling across their track,
In which they seemed to drift, so far—so far,
That they forgot friends, home, and life ; and all
They'd done, or been, or known, passed like a pall
Away, and they were nothing. And they fain,
So strong the innate love of life, would then
Have entered int' the meanest, vilest den
Of animated being ; with the worm

Have sought their home, and blessed the lizard's
form,

Envy the serpent's coil and reptile's crest.

For then the humblest life seemed rich and warm,

Full of a glory they had once possessed,

But now could not, being to nothing passed ;

A state with which all things were most at war—

That vacuum, which nature doth abhor

Their trance awoke, o'erpleased themselves to find

Still amid pain, yet still amid mankind.

Oh, few, when stretched upon the couch of death,

Long worn and racked in every aching limb,

Can watch th' adieu of life's sweet, fleeting breath,

Nor feel some fond regrets have birth within—

Some anxious longings—first th' abyss to sound,

Into whose unknown depths they soon shall bound.

But when we learn, in flush of health and ease,

That hour in which we must resign our lease

Of heaven's sunlight, of earth's loveliness,

Of all that ever came to us to bless

Our pathway,—who but shrinks to rise,

And take his journey to that dreary land ?

Who casts not back his doubting, tearful eyes,

As half expecting that some angel hand

Might write "reprieved" upon his native skies ?

But when God calls not ; when the innocent

Must see all nature folded like a scroll

From vision, to make man a merriment

In the small, gurgling, red, and trickling pool,
Which gathers by the dying one,—great God,
Are men indeed one common brotherhood?

Not long have they in dark suspense to grope,
If that can be suspense which has no hope.
Again they lead the foredoomed captives in,
To listen to the sentence' awful sound—
Echoed by all the outward world of din—
“We yield you up to torture and Wahound.”

ARGUMENT.

Wawayenda retires from the council, and muses alone by the banks of the Hudson, lamenting the unfortunate issue of his love. He compares ambition, fame, and affection, as sources of happiness. His vow. The appearance of a vessel upon the Hudson causes him to return hastily to the camp, where he finds the captives prepared for the sacrifice. The scene of torture is interrupted by the arrival of the mysterious strangers, the white men. Wawayenda bears Manhatta away from the place of torture to a secluded spot, where she endeavors to persuade him to retract his celibatic vow.

CANTO FIFTH.

THE RESCUE.

FILLED with unrest, despair, and fear, and pain,
From the dread scene, had Wawayenda ta'en,
Along the Hudson's chiming shores, his way,
Where naught but God's and his own thoughts had
 sway,

To curse, repent, and muse, and kneel, and pray.
Ah! when love seems from every bosom flown,
And human hearts are pulseless as the stone,
From human eyes no streams of sympathy
Flow down to meet thine own exhaustless sea
Of tears; then seas, and woods, and stones,
Seem to rise up with kindred sympathies.
The forest sighs for sigh; the deep wave groans
To our o'erburdened breast; wild nature moans,
Weeps to her child as with a mother's heart,
And as from foes to friends, so we from men depart,
And to the woods and waves our griefs impart.

Thus Wawayenda did his sorrows urge,
In friendly converse with the wave's deep surge :

“ All that I covet not, from birth was mine ;
Rank, name of courage, and supremacy.
What are these bubbles, that a heart should twine
Its chords around them ? What are they to me,
But the vile means from lesser ills to flee ?
Can they with pleasure fill one moment's void ?
Poor names, thoughts, shadows—ne'er to be enjoyed ;
Ne'er to be folded to the heart, and pressed,
With throbbing pulse, to their possessor's breast.
They are but films, and ghosts, and flickering lights,
That hover over life's unhealthy marsh,
And bring no sweetest moments, no delights,
To pay the traveller for his journey harsh.
But in our loves alone are real joys ;
They are the atmosphere of heaven,—the poise
For all earth's ills—the path to happiness,
Where man in being blest doth chiefly bless.
Courage and fame sink back from our embrace
As barren as when first we sought their smile.
But love for maid or kindred, home or race,
Greets us with issue.—Though it be th' ideal—
Kindred affection—but much more if real,
We hail the fount of joy, and the loved heir
Welds, of my love and me, a parent pair.

“ Oh ! why then, God of heaven ! thus comes down
That withering blight, omen of thy dark frown,
Searing like forest-fires all in its path,
Which thus consume my growing hopes with wrath ?
Whence all I love not 'round me blooms and flows,
And all I love straightway its lids doth close,
And stiffened lies in death's prostrate repose !
Why, when childlike I grasp the flowery fly
'Neath my rude love, doth the loved object die ?
When such sweet syrens smile beneath life's wave,
Why, when I plunge, do I embrace my grave ?
Why, when the fairest form seems all my own,
Life's robe, departing, leaves a skeleton ?
Beauty no more for me hath left a charm,
No more for me hath love a folding arm.
The blushing tenderness of maiden youth,
The clinging glance, and eye of angel truth,
Will meet me oft in life—to be passed by
Without a smile, or thought, or tear, or sigh,
As one whose soul roams forth in vacancy.
The woods may still be green, and their full leaves
Be vocal with the voice of tuneful bird ;
And I may roam, the only thing that grieves,
Where naught but sounds of gushing joy are heard.
For thrush or robin sings of love alone,
And yields to yielding love his sweetest tone :
But when that love is checked, no more to sing,
But droop his head beneath his lonely wing,

And, sickening, pine and die before the spring.
The sun may still shine on ; but now for me
No more to usher in the glorious day :
Even now he seems like some consuming moon,
Treading the void of night instead of noon ;
Piercing the darkness, like some glimmering urn
That, 'mid the cloudy midnight, strives to burn.
For all my sun is set—my star so bright—
For me no ray darts through the gloomy night.
Withered my flowers, and hushed is music's tone,
I roam through life, dark, silent, and alone.
Great Spirit, as I kneel before thee now,
Help me to offer no unholy vow ;
But help me all my purpose to compare,
Then mayst thou help me as I truly swear.
Manhatta have I loved—Manhatta lost :
She was my life, my being, and my soul ;
And when her spirit the dark vale hath crossed,
Shall I still live to gentle love's control ?
Ah, no ! till I thy messengers may see—
Till our fond hearts be intertwined by thee—
Till earth and life fade in eternity—
No maid may wife of Wawayenda be !”

Some time he rested, kneeling, and then rose,
And turned where wide the restless Hudson flows,
And wildly started. For upon its crests,
Far out, but clear, distinct, there proudly rests

A giant sprite—a moving thing of life ;
With low, dark base, and wings, as of the swan,
Lifted for flight ; tall as the hemlock proud,
When white with winter's snows ; and, as a cloud
In summer lightly wafted, through the strife
Of foaming waters dashes—and still on,
Its course serene majestic pursues.
Not without fright once and again he views.
His heart with hope and fear alternate burns,
Then int' the wood and to the camp returns.

There from the piles the curling smoke doth rise ;
Flames lick their tongues before the sacrifice.
The hosts, impatient, throng the captives 'round,
As to the central stake their limbs are bound.
Mock groans and curses fill the darkening air,
And horrid shouts of fiendish joy are there,
Rising from devils dancing everywhere
In furious ecstasies around despair.
Here waves the hatchet's thirst insatiate ;
And there the slow, envenomed arrows wait ;
Here patient piles of burning coals arise,
Whose fiery fonts the victims shall baptize ;
While gleaming brands, snatched from the altar
fire,
From soul to soul desires of torture bear ;
Till flames of hatred every breast inspire,
And hills and vales gleam a contagious glare.

Embraces past ; the last adieu is said ;
The final prayer hath up to heaven sped :
Their eyes are closed from earth—their thoughts
from pain ;
Their ears are listening to a heavenly strain :
Flames, taunts, and groans forgot—on wings they
rise ;
They see the spirit-bowers beyond the skies !
When lo ! upon the Hudson's waving crests,
A snow-white messenger from heaven rests,
Of giant form, and wings as of the cloud.
In wonder mute, the savage knee is bowed ;
The hills are silent ; the fierce storm is still,
Waiting the mystery of Heaven's will.
Now, thence quick lightnings seem to flash their
glare,
And thunders break upon the startled air ;
And next, with wonder wild, the Indian sees
Their very bolts come like a tempest blast,
Ploughing the earth—rending the giant trees,
While stones seem quick and earth to life hath past.
And when the sudden, overwhelming storm,
And the deep terror of their wild alarm
Subside and pass, behold around them lie
A hundred forms of groaning agony !
While here and there the sickening remnants strown—
A reeking limb, some drops of gore, or bone—
Bespoke to all the wondrous, fearful power

Which smote them thus in their triumphant hour.
And where is he—the high-priest of the flame?
Why doth his voice no more assert his claim
To torture and revenge? That voice is still!
The hosts now pale at Heaven's miraculous will,
Press in fierce haste into the flaming sea—
Their bonds unloose, and set the captives free.

Scarce the terrific wonder yet was stilled,
When now Manhatta, whom the danger thrilled
With heroic zeal, faint and half consciously,
Was swiftly borne from the affrighted throng
More lone and unfrequented paths along,
Till in a lonely grot, retired and sweet,
Fenced by wild rocks and perfumed laurel groves—
Such in which lovers might by moonlight meet,
To sigh the tender lyric of their loves—
Her guardian paused; and fitting a rude couch
With gentle hand, that loved yet feared to touch
Its charge, he would the nearest spring have sought,
And thence some drops of its cool nectar brought,
To touch her heated brows with fondest care,
And call her spirit to its temple fair,
When, to his joy, her lids a moment part.
She looks—she starts—her vision fixed and wild;
One hand her head—the other stills her heart,
Till their quick beatings end in a sweet smile.
Then, with frank ardor, and extended arms,

What ! cast me off ? attempt thy love to scorn ?
Thou canst not, if thou wouldst, that task forlorn
Accomplish. Nay ! no longer thus assume.
There is within thy throbbing heart no room
For such disdain. Though our fond souls between
Lay distance greater than yon orb serene
Might in a circling season's round pass o'er ;
Though time, space, every obstacle conflict,
Or all the powers of earth should interdict ;
Nay, naught but thy heart's firm, recorded vow,
Which thou wilt never give—" 'Tis given now !"
Groaned Wawayenda—low, in deep despair,
As still he gazed into the vacant air.
"Manitoe hath my vow ; 'tis told to Heaven,
And in the charge of holy angels given ;
Spoke in a moment's haste, yet it destroys
More than I hoped on earth, and all thy joys—"
"Speak ! speak !" Manhatta cried : "tell me thy vow ;
If it was wrong, God will forgive it now :
'Twas made in haste—thou wert asleep or mad.
Say that thou madest no vow—it is so sad.
What then thou didst forget—remember now,
That if Manhatta lives, and may be thine,
The oath should not be kept—it is no vow.
Was not that reservation in thy mind ?
Yes ! 'tis there always. Swear thou art a wretch,
Not if my loving arm around thee stretch,
And I thus back thy raven locks may press,

And plant thus on thy fevered brows a kiss !
Speak, brave ! not to dissolve my doubts, but thine ;
I'm sure thy lips could frame no words to bind
Our souls asunder. Heaven proclaims me thine :
I challenge thee one hostile word to find."

"Manhatta, I have sworn—" "Nay! hast not
sworn :

Pray, say not that ! 'Twas in an idle dream
You pettishly exclaimed what you may not perform ;
But what was that which did so fearful seem ?"
"Great Heaven ! I swore—Manhatta, loved and lost,
Hath been my life, my being, and my soul ;
And now, that she the shadowy vale hath crossed,
I, too, am dead to every love's control ;
Henceforth, till I thy messengers shall see—
Till our fond hearts are intertwined by thee—
Till earth and life fade in eternity—
No maid may wife of Wawayenda be !"

Returned Manhatta : "Still, I am not lost ;
For, save in dreams, that vale have I ne'er crossed :
Thus, Wawayenda, drive this ghost from thee ;
Burst thine illegal bondage, and be free."
"No!" said the chief ; "no more such pleas pursue ;
My words were false, my oath must still be true."
"So may it be, and shall," Manhatta cried ;
Yet thou my truthful brave, and I thy bride.

Thou swear'st 'till thou God's messengers shall see :
Behold ! they rest upon yon river's wave ;
Wahound by them has sought eternity,
And by their lightnings have thy chiefs a grave.
In wisdom, form, power, attitude, or grace,
'Tis blasphemy to style them not heaven's race.
Angels ! for whom even thou couldst not, they save
From the fierce terrors of a flaming grave.
Thou, too, hast sworn, 'till God himself shall twine
Thy noble heart, beating with love, with mine,
No maid may wife of Wawayenda be ;
I'd have thee keep that oath, and cherish thee
The more for it. For human bonds are broke
Like the frail aspen ; God's are as the oak.
Uncas, our eyes are oft more false than dreams ;
Methinks when true hearts, each to each are given,
Our hands are not with us, as thus it seems,
But wafted up and joined by God in heaven.
Speak but that this is true, and thou art free
To seal us one with love's last parted kiss :
Then I may wife of Wawayenda be !
For can life but be one eternal bliss ?

“Look on me, Wawayenda ! Bring thine eye
Away from those chill visions in the sky :
Naught thou canst love is there. Within that blue,
O'erspersed with clouds, are no loved lips and eyes ;
No cheeks blush there ; no bosom loves imbue

With as sweet thrills as glow in paradise.
Nor on those frowning woods—thy heart's not there ;
Thou lovest no giant oak, no maple fair :
Nay, if they win thy tender looks from me,
Go kiss them ; kneel and sigh, ' my love ! sweet
tree !'

No ! thou lovest me. Ah ! now thine eye is mine ;
And now thy heart is, for I see its tear
Within thine eye suffused, thus needless shine ;
And now thine arm folds all thou holdest dear.
Tell me not, Uncas, ' I may ne'er be thine !'
Say not thou wilt not love ; it proves thy love.
For none, but one love-mad, would vow it. Brute,
Nor bird, nor serpent,—none in air above,
Nor earth beneath, are to love's echo mute ;
From things most cruel, solitary, vile,
To angels, wreathing love's unending smile ;
The robin, amorous with the breath of spring ;
The linnet, flitting on coquettish wing ;
The thrush, that to his mate doth sweetly sing ;
The eagle's scream, that makes the forest ring ;
The gentle hare, that with his mate is seen
Nipping the tender blades, by brooks made green
In early spring ; the buck, that, proud and slow,
Suspects, defends, and guards the gentle doe.
But why note further ? Do not these suffice
To show that love's no casual device,
But rather some rich tropic fruit, but meant

For our most luscious food and nourishment ?
Say thou wilt love, and prattling infancy
Shall gather yet by thy paternal knee ;
And all I love in thee, or thee in me,
Renewed in them, shall thank and worship thee.
Say thou wilt love, and by that word we wend .
Within the inmost, holiest shrine of love.
Let all vows bend—for joy that hath no end,
And bliss as pure, though deep as heaven above.”
He could but yield, and kiss the spirit’s shrine
At which he worshipped, saying, “ Though I resign
All future heavens, this heaven must be mine !”

ARGUMENT.

Scene of festive rejoicing, by both Shattauchs and Iroquois, over the supernatural arrival of the strangers. The rescue of the captives and the return of peace. The song of the white minstrel. Marriage of Wawayenda and Manhatta.

CANTO SIXTH.

CONCLUSION.

'Tis noon. In the blue, spotless vault of heaven
Shines God's bright image of his love and light.
'Round autumn's trees unto the winds are giving
Their leafy hues of various colors bright.
Above, the birds pour forth their melody ;
Beneath, the Hudson rolls with gentle sway ;
But on its lonely waters rides to-day
A stranger, beautiful, in easy grace ;
On which the assembled hosts, admiringly,
Foeman and friend, in equal wonder gaze ;
View and review, on shore—in light canoe—
And find each time some theme of wonder new :
Its sable hull—its long and tapering masts—
Its slender spars, bearing the winged sail—
Its easy grace, as on the billows pass
Along its huge proportions,—all avail
To chain the wonder of the simple mind.

But more than all, those forms of human kind,
For such they seem in form, although in soul,
In wisdom, subtlety, intelligence,
All things are subject unto their control,
To fill with wonder new each mortal sense.
For now, as in the twinkling of an eye,
The white wings spread, and, through the wave and
sky,
The giant walks the tides in majesty.
Together gaze Shattauks and Iroquois,
In mute surprise, delight, and curious joy.

Now, where black, threatening mouths her sides en-
shroud,
Whence a deep freight of night seems lowering
through,
Burst forth the lightnings clothed in robes of cloud,
And thunders roar to all the shores aloud ;
First fierce and sharp, then in the distance, low,
Then dying 'mid the startled woods away ;
Anon returned again—now lost and gone ;
Anon, when all around is calm and still,
Louder and sharper, yet the echoes come ;
Back from the palisades they rumbling roam,
As if those bleak cliffs offered them no home,
And wake the tenant echoes of each hill.
The savage, listening, kneels and worships them :
Sublimar gods to him are not revealed.

The lightnings flash, the thunder rolls for them—
For them approving heaven's deep echoes peal.
Them God hath blessed with angel's snow-white
hue ;

Their eye is filled with heaven's borrowed blue ;
Clouds lightly curl upon their radiant brows,—
To these, and wisdom infinite, he bows.
Again are heard, in quick, successive peals,
Those sounds burst forth and revel o'er the deep.
The red man listens, and enraptured, feels
The good Great Spirit hath awoke from sleep,
And sent his angels, full of brotherhood,
For some undreamed, exalted work of good.

While, robed in clouds, the stranger onward keeps—
And in wide, circling curve the waters sweeps—
Still more the worship of their souls t' enchain,
By graceful movements on the watery plain,
In diverse scenes the lengthened shores display
The aspect of a nation's holiday.
O'er hill, in vale, along th' extended plain,
To diverse sports assembled groups repair.
Here, the wild elk is loosened from the rein ;
Thither, the wingèd arrow cleaves the air ;
Here, the strong arm the foaming bison holds ;
There, the charmed breast is wound in serpent's folds.
These hew the target in the distant oak ;
Those bury there th' unerring tomahawk.

Some mark the lengthened course, by perfect bounds,
Some swiftly ply to gain th' appointed rounds ;
While from the groups approving plaudits sent,
Ring forth their pleasure through the firmament ;
And all the air, for many a rood around,
Echoes with friendly strife and joyful sound.

But now, the groups their various fields desert ;
The elk is left—the bison unpursued ;
The hatchet rests beneath the falling skirt ;
The arrow nestles 'mid the feathered brood.
Before the council-hall the hosts are drawn ;
Thence, past ten thousand warriors, stretching on
Till the dark lines are in the distance lost,
'Mid the black trunks that through their columns
cross,

In the thick wood beyond. Silent, they form
An army, dead, save their own beating hearts,
To burst, as bursts the calm into the storm,
In thunder shouts that all the woods alarm ;
At which the denizens of the forest start,
And list, and flee away to coverts dark.
As now the folds back from yon entrance part,
And issuing thence a man of holy mien,—
Kind, though commanding—grave and yet serene—
Clad in majestic flowing robes, all white
As the new fallen snow,—walked, bearing high
A burnished cross, that seemed with heavenly light

To burst on every mute, admiring eye.
Him following, two forms, embracing, move
Along the lines, and meet their joyful cry.
One is Chenang—the chief of their first love ;
The other, one of those who from above
Have glided down upon yon white spread wing,
To bless the Indian's home ; and from the skies
Have brought the form, hue, soul, and every thing
Which man might wish to loan from paradise.

Next, Shawangunk and Wawarsing are seen,
August in power and terrible in mien.
Then duly follow agèd Shandaken,
With hoar Oneda—venerable men.
Kee-wat-a-goush-ka of the northern stream,
And Makamatam of the youthful gleam.
Next, old Nappekamah, with gentle eye,
Of aged, thoughtful, quiet dignity ;
His upward visions to the heavens ascend,
Where soon, in peace, his lofty flight shall tend.
With him Manhatta—maiden of my rhyme,
In form an angel, and attired a queen :
No more the scoffs that jeered in former time,
Nor the rude robes that made her beauty mean,
As on his arms she doth confiding lean.
Uncas, her early loved, and lover boy,
The Wawayenda of her trial-scene,
Next comes arrayed, chief of the Iroquois.

The long procession, wending on its way,
Arrives at length 'neath an ancestral oak,
Whose venerable limbs salute the sky,
Ready to parry back the tempest's stroke,
And when all nature groans but breathe a sigh ;
By whose entowered trunk, raised from a mound,
Whence ran the eye in free, broad circuit 'round
A plain walled in by hills, the chiefs now paused,
In admiration wild, and 'mid applause,
In which the peopled hills in joy seemed lost.
A half-angelic youth came forth, and brushed,
With free, bold hand, the harp's enchanting strings ;
And soon, when every whisper faint was hushed,
Softly and sweetly thus the minstrel sings :

“In the council-hall they stood condemned,
The nation's voice approving ;
There hovered 'round no kindly friend—
None weeping, and none loving.

“They were borne away to the fagot-pile,
And the flames were bright around them ;
They prayed but for strength to endure the while,
And strength for relief was found them.

“For they looked away from their flaming couch,
And an angel sate on the waters ;
The rage of his heart did his thunders avouch,
And his lightnings spoke in slaughters.

“Their flames were quenched, but their hearts are
fired

With love for the Spirit's children,
Whom he hath sent from the firmament
To dwell with the men of the wildren.

“Woe hath its day, but that day its night
Of joy to all true lovers,
When Heaven as surely their lips shall unite
As heaven above them hovers.

“Let the chieftain clasp his fair young bride ;
Let the brave be beauty's defender ;
And the happy maid, whate'er betide,
Of her love and beauty render.

“Ye have plunged in strife—ye have glut your thirst,
And many have felled and have fallen ;
But ye've buried the blade—may the traitor be cursed
With each woe that your souls can call on,

“Who shall dare to divide, like a fratricide,
The hands ye have joined as brothers,
Till he feels that his guilt in no bosom may hide—
Nay, a curse shall burn in his mother's !

“Rejoice ! rejoice ! for the sons of light
Upon earth are walking in glory !

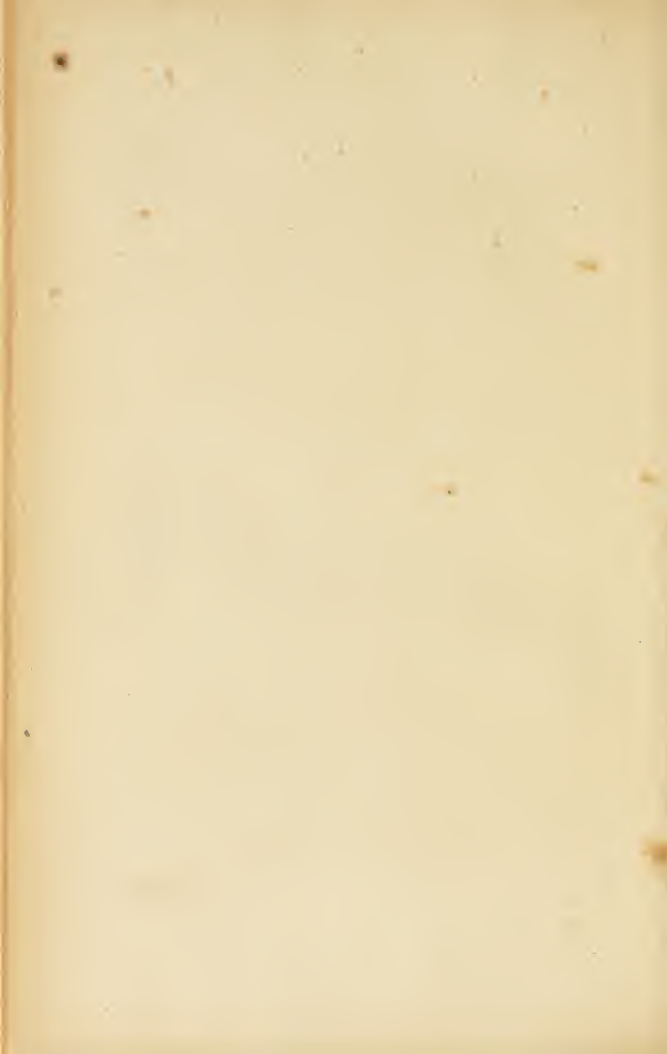
Your path they have lit, and no more shall be night—
No more shall the earth be gory !

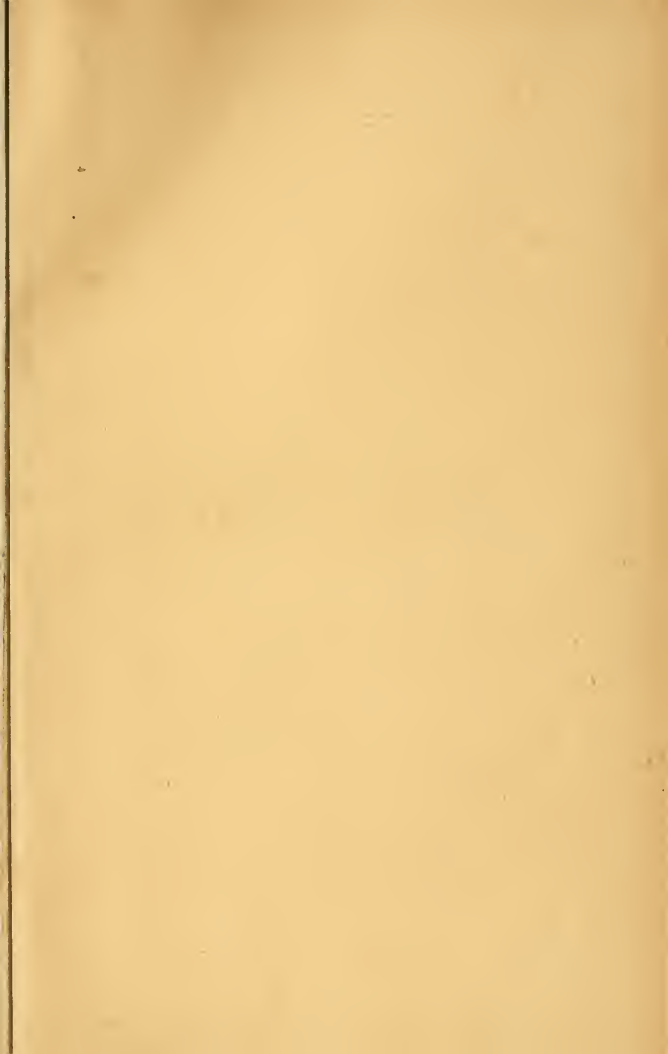
“ We saw not the sun—the clouds shadowed o’er us ;
We saw not the moon in heaven ;
But the Spirit hath breathed, and the stars are before us ;
The storm-cloud flies and is driven !”

Silence returns. The priest his cross doth raise
Again before their mute, admiring gaze ;
’Neath which, amid a falling rain of tears
Of joy from all, Nappekamah uprears
The kneeling Wawayenda, and the fair
Manhatta,—then one lingering moment stand
They—father, son, and holy spirit, there,
With eyes upraised to heaven in mutest prayer,—
Then placed in each the other’s loving hand,
While shouts from all the hosts broke on the air :
“ Thus ever may the brave enjoy the fair !”

The hills re-echo with a kindred strain,
Till joy transported fills the mount and plain ;
While, far and wide, the wafting winds upraise
Loud songs of peace, and gratitude, and praise :
Those strains, so wished, so seldom heard above—
Ascending vows of brotherhood and love !”









LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 016 112 416 3

